CLARK'S WORKS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

SERMONS.

By Rev. DANIEL A. CLARK,

Author of "Conference Sermons," "Church Safe," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

"Preach the preaching that I bid thee."

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN S. TAYLOR,

Brick Church Chapel.

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1837.

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ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1836,
BY DANIEL A. CLARK, A.M.
In the Clerk's Office for the Southern District of New-York.

HENRY LUDWIG, PRINTER.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

From the New-York Observer of November 19, 1836.

Rev. D. A. Clark's Works.—I was truly happy to see the notice of the publication of "Clark's Works," or three volumes of Sermons, by Rev. Daniel A. Clark. No one, I presume, whose conscience has ever been probed by his searching appeals, or whose heart has ever been warmed by his fervid and glowing piety, or whose spirit has ever been overwhelmed by his melting eloquence, or whose sense of duty has ever been quickened by his forcible and practical illustrations, but must rejoice in the privilege of reading at his leisure, and praying over in secret, such productions of such a man.

Mr. Clark is so well and so extensively known to the American churches, that nothing need be said to recommend him or his writings. He has been justly styled one of the best practical writers of the age, and I do hope that every minister will procure his sermons as a model, and every Christian for his own benefit, to help him on to heaven.

EVANGELICUS.

From the New-York Mirror of October 29, 1836.

Mr. John S. Taylor, of the Brick church chapel, has issued the second volume of Sermons of the Reverend Daniel A. Clark's; they are written with all the elegance of Blair, with the depth and energy of Sherlock and Horsley; and are an eloquent appeal to Christians of every denomination, urging the great and fundamental truths of Christianity, and vividly impressing the moral and essential points of a believer's actions and doctrines.

From the New-York Evangelist.

Clark's Works.—There are some books which will be read by every body in a few weeks after they leave the press, and then laid aside, and three years afterward little or nothing is known or said about them. There are others that more gradually attract the public attention, and when this is once secured the hold is permanent; they are transmitted from father to son, and from the venerable grandsire to

children's children, and one edition after another is demanded, till their record is indelible on the catalogue of our choicest standard works.—Among this latter class we rank, without hesitation, the writings of the Reverend Daniel A. Clark. Of his three volumes of sermons, the writer of this article has had opportunity of examining only the first; and of this he is prepared to speak in strong terms of approbation. It is well known that Father Clark never permits any work in which he engages to decrease in interest; therefore we may have the utmost confidence respecting the worth of the other two volumes. But his sermons must be *studied* that they may be duly appreciated. You will be far from doing them justice if you simply take them up hastily, glance at the texts, the plans, and the concluding sentences, and then pass your judgment.

You must take them to your retired room, read them deliberately and prayerfully, and they will instruct you; you will *love* them, and will feel gratified to find leisure to reperuse them. In the writings of D. A. Clark, you will seldom find any extraordinary things said, but you will find common truths presented in such a manner that every one must feel and remember them. Let me refer to one sentence to illustrate this last remark, (vol. i. p. 123,) "The cause of temperance moved on briskly till it was discovered that the church held in her fellowship those who would drink the cup of devils, but has stayed in its march *till she can have time to entomb her inebriates.*" Here we have nothing but the common-place idea, that the use of ardent spirits in the church retards the temperance reformation; but his mode of expressing this makes the whole world pause, gazing on the church of Jesus Christ as she bears to the sepulchre the besotted obstacles of reform. Once have this figrue before us, and it is impossible to forget it. It is my prayer that I may see these sermons in the house of each one of my parishioners, and I trust that this is the desire of not a few ministers.

J. R. J.

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SERMON XLII.

THE SINNER'S DESPERATE DEPRAVITY.

Jeremiah iii. 5.

Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

THIS passage evidently teaches the doctrine, that *men are as depraved as they can be in present circumstances.* The charge is made by the infinitely Holy One, and can be fully substantiated against every member of the unregenerate family. The justice of the charge may appear from a consideration of the following positions:

I. That God in his providence has surrounded the sinner with many circumstances operating powerfully to modify human character.

II. That by these circumstances every sinner is actually restrained in his wickedness, and held back in his downward career.

III. That every sinner does make the attempt, and succeeds as far as God will let him, to sunder these ligatures that would hold him fast to reason, hope, and heaven.

Among the circumstances which illustrate the first positon, I mention,

1. Education. This makes Christendom differ from the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty. This makes the same land differ from what it was while a land of idolatry. This makes

us to differ from our forefathers when under the superstition and tyranny of the Druids. This occasions the difference between us and the savage of the western wilds. Education, then, operates greatly in modifying character, and in preventing men from being as bad as they would be.

2. Human law has a similar effect. How near right, think you, would men be, if they were not controlled by human laws? Look at some country while in a state of anarchy. Look at some city or village where the influence of law is suspended. Look at France, while under the reign of terror, when law was abrogated, and see one company after another pass under the guillotine; and the executioners of to-day the victims of to-morrow; and, tell us, is not character greatly modified by municipal law?

3. By the law of God. If men have no other belief in it, but that which may be denominated the faith of history, it still greatly modifies human character. Men have been sorry a thousand times that God ever issued his law. They have hated to read, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." They have been sorry to read, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery; "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal," &c. But men have been in a measure restrained by these laws, while they have hated the Lawgiver, and despised his statutes.

4. The troublesome supervision of conscience has greatly modified human character. This everlasting censorship, while it has held men back from sin, has been hated, and warred against, and scowled upon, by the whole human family.

5. The whole Gospel,—the law drawn out into offensive interference with the sinful pleasures and follies of men,

has modified human character beyond all calculation. It so commends itself to their reason, and applies such power to their consciences, that it becomes exceedingly difficult to withstand it. It is so tender, majestic, commanding, and reasonable, that it for a time melts and overawes many who ultimately reject all its provisions.

6. All the Gospel institutions—the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the church-going bell, the Lord's supper, the ordinance of baptism, every thing associated with Christian worship, operates in modifying human character, and rendering it, in appearance, better than it is.

7. The desire of heaven has the same effect. None, perhaps, are so abandoned as not to hope that they may, after all, live and be happy after death. The bare possibility that they shall reach heaven, and wish to unite in the song of redemption, prevents them from being as wicked as they would be. This operates as a powerful restraint, and helps greatly to modify character.

8. The fear of hell, also, holds back many from the commission of crime. Men are afraid that what they have heard respecting hell is true. Though the subject often excites their unhallowed mirth, it is a mirth which has its misgivings. Their very laughter betrays their fears. And though they trifle with the thought of everlasting burnings, it is with the manifest design of keeping their courage up. The fear of hell thus operates in modifying the character, perhaps even of the most worldly.

9. The expectation of a judgment has the same effect. They have some apprehension that they may be called to answer at the bar of God for their deeds on earth. They have "a fearful looking for" of this dread reality. They think it may be true that God will bring them into judgment, for every work, whether it be good or evil, and

apportion his awards accordingly. And hence, this apprehension serves as a wonderful restraint upon their character.

10. Public sentiment is a great preventive of crime. Men are so constituted as to be obliged to respect public sentiment. They cannot endure the indignation of a whole community; and public sentiment in Christian lands favours virtue, and frowns on vice. The assassin is thus disarmed—the thief becomes honest—the swindler pays his debts—because public sentiment compels him. No one has daring enough to be utterly indifferent to the good opinion of all his acquaintance; and character is thus greatly modified.

11. The domestic affections produce the same result. The silken cords which entwine around the family circle, prevent the commission of many a crime. The father, the husband, the mother, the wife, the son, the brother, the daughter, the sister—all the endeared relations which the members of a family sustain to each other, and which are strengthened every day, operate greatly in the formation of character. How many a son has been saved from ruin, through the affection which he bore to his mother? How often has a sister's entreaties tamed the ferocious spirit of a brother, and rendered it yielding and lovely.

Thus we see how curbed men often are, while in their native state. This world, then, is in disguise. God, who only knows the full influence of these modifying circumstances, knows what is in man. Therefore, when he looks down from heaven, he still pronounces "the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint," "every imagination of the thoughts evil," specious appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thus we have recounted some of the circumstances

which modify the human character. These are, indeed, of vast importance. They result in what we term *civility, good morals* &c.—all bearing kindly upon the present condition of man. They all speak the wisdom and kindness of God,—they are so many golden chains let down to earth, to modify its moral corruptions. God is good in every such ligature, by which he holds men within the reach of that blessed influence, which can sanctify and make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We ought, then, to thank God for these modifying circumstances, and pray that he would put these chains all on, and keep them on, till even the vilest and most obdurate shall yield to his infinite love. We ought to view men in more hopeful circumstances, in proportion as God shall hold them by these moral bonds. For, while a young man respects the Sabbath, and is obedient to his parents, there is more hope of him than afterwards. While he is afraid to swear, we may hope that he will begin to pray. While he dare not avow open infidelity, we may hope, if we do our duty, that he will yet believe revealed truth, to the saving of his soul.

II. By these circumstances every sinner is actually restrained in his wickedness, and held back in his downward career. In proof of which we observe,

1. Men are *uneasy* under these circumstances; which shows them to be restraints. Let men be unrestrained, and they will be easy. It is only pain of some kind that renders them uneasy, and willing to change their position. Hence they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.

2. Men are constantly trying to alter their circumstances. But they are too indolent by nature to try to alter

their circumstances, unless they are circumstances of restraint.

> So when a raging fever burns,
> They shift from side to side by turns;
> And 't is a poor relief they gain,
> To change the place, but keep the pain.

3. When men at length alter their circumstances in any of these respects, they often show out a worse character; manifesting what they would have been before, if they might, if these restraints had been sundered, and they let loose upon the world.

4. When these restraints are all removed, men are uniformly far more wicked than if they had not been imposed. All will admit this. It is therefore manifest that these circumstances operate powerfully in restraining men from a career of sin and ruin. Even in the church itself there are vast multitudes who become apostates, because their apparent goodness was made up by such restraints: they had really no concern for the glory of God, and were not religious because they loved religion. Beware, then, lest you be left to fall away from your supposed faith, and hurry on to destruction. Not only should professors fear, but the impenitent also should fear and tremble; because God holds them as accountable beings, completely in his power, and in kindness, for a time, lets down ten thousand restraints upon them. God now controls the madness of his enemies. He puts his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips; binds them with his restraints; and holds them, perhaps, in apparent subjection. In this the character of hypocrites and unbelievers is distinguished from the truly religious. Their wickedness is merely suppressed, not subdued: their amiable appearances are produced by restraining providence, not by converting grace. The heart of the

real Christian is not suppressed, but radically changed. The grace of God has transformed the tiger into a lamb, and the wolf into a kid. The Christian abandons sin because he hates it, and follows after holiness because he loves it. This constitutes the beauty of the Christian character, and this the distinguishing glory of heaven. *There* will be there no restraint but love. The whole population will love to do right; and impelled by love alone, will employ, in doing right, their energies forever. On the other hand, as the character of the wicked is here varied and modified by restraints, God will only need to take off these moral ligatures, and substitute the everlasting chains of darkness, to surround them with the horrors of hell. The exceeding baseness of the wicked appears in this—that all these powerful restraints are required to hold them fast in mercy, and prevent them from doing worse; and the horror of hell in this—that all its population will love to do wrong, and in wrath be let loose to do it, so far as they can amidst fetters which will hold fast only to gall, and chains which will confine only to burn. How amazing, in view of all these considerations, is the operation of these providential circumstances in restraining the career of the wicked! We are thus prepared to consider the remaining position: viz:

III. That every sinner does make the attempt, and succeeds as far as God will let him, to sunder these ligatures that would hold him fast to reason, hope, and heaven.

One would think that a sinner would not wish to have these kindly ligatures sundered. Where may he wander, or rather where may he not wander, and against what rock may he not dash, and into what bottomless vortex may he not plunge with all his interests, and perish with his all, when he shall have thrown off the fastenings

that hold him to the throne of the Eternal? While we go the ground over, and see how he raves, and rages, and flounces like a bull in the net, and would break loose from God, if he might, whatever be the probable result upon himself, and his hopes, and his family, and his character, and whatever the relationship he must sunder, we are amazed at every step of the experiment, and we are amazed at the result, and at the blindness of the immortal being that is in a measure let loose to try his skill in the awful experiment, till God gives him up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and leaves him a prey to himself, and he is destroyed in his own waywardness. Let us, then, trace his steps, and see his ravings:

1. See how he breaks over and breaks through the restraints of *education*. He tries to throw off what he knew of God, and all he had learned of the Saviour, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit; all he had learned of the operations of the Godhead. in the history of the church. And when he cannot forget, he raves at his own recollections, and madly reproaches the mind that cannot forget, and will not retrace and throw off what it is now to him a burden and curse to recollect. But the Bible rushes upon his unholy mind with the vividness of a new, and fresh, and hated story. O, that he had never read that book! he cries; that his mother had not furnished him a Bible when he left his home, or had not made him promise to read it every day! But if in his senses he may not forget, perhaps he may induce God to put out his mind, and destroy the powers of recollection. And this is now the only prayer he makes, and the only thing he cares for. In the mean time he hates the very lessons that he learned in school, and would tread them all down as one does the worthless weeds that are overgrowing his path in a garden. But,

2. When he has tried for a time, but has tried in vain, to retrace the process of education, he finds himself reined in by *human laws*. If he cannot forget God, perhaps he can snap asunder the power of human control. Man cannot be omniscient. He can evade all human ties. He can rise above the law, and tread it down like the mire of the street. Or he can violate its precepts and despise its regulations, and hold on and hold out in despite of all its sanctions, presuming in his heart that God will not know, neither will the Almighty consider it. If the law does say, "Thou shalt not violate the rest of the Sabbath," he can drink and carouse, or lounge and loiter and the world will only esteem him the better, especially if he add generosity and liberality to his infidelity and to his deeds of daring and outrage. He may violate any law that lays its restraints on this side of the judgment. Perhaps there may come no day of hated and holy retribution, and then he can have the infernal satisfaction of laughing at the Christians. If the failure of the divine promise of such a day should ruin the world, it will not, as he conceives, ruin him. He would be willing that no such appointment should be fulfilled, even though the failure should tarnish forever the character of Jehovah. If the law does say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," if he can violate it, and the crime be hid, and no human tribunal take cognizance of the deed, he cares not for the law. He cares not what misery his iniquities occasion, if his deeds do not break into open daylight. If it break the heart of a mother, and if a father writhe under the agony of a ruined son, he does not care for the tears of that mother, nor the agonies of that father. The deed he has done he does not intend shall come to light, in the present life, and he can easily bring himself to care for nothing beyond. Thus he throws off

nearly all the restraints of human law, and contents himself with the purpose never to commit murder, or theft, or any crime that would draw him out to the light. Thus he blesses himself in his own delusion, and trusts for safety in his own righteousness. But he meets with more disturbance yet.

3. From the *law* of God. Impenitent and unbelieving, he has read in that law what if he cannot put down, he is a ruined man: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Thus is dashed, at the first stroke, the whole fabric of a dark and fatal idolatry. If man worships his money, or his merchandise, or his farm, or his friend, or any thing but God, or gives any thing else his supreme affection, even if he does not professedly worship it, he is condemned of God. And he adds, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." But how unfashionable it would be to care about this commandment, and let the apprehension that God "will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," produce a serious moment, or a pang of distress! It is so noble not to care about God, or what God can say, or do, and it would be so cowardly, so ungentlemanly, to be afraid to sin, that the offender justs breaks this grand and controlling ligature easier than many that would seem to have no such power to bind and to restrain. An effort not so mighty as that which sundered Samson's green withes, puts them all aside. But,

4. Not quite so easily does he dispose of the troublesome supervision of *conscience*. This vicegerent of Heaven stays often many a month after open war is declared. It sometimes will hold close conference with the heart, although the heart may wish to be alone. It is that power that will not die, nor see corruption. It will not go to sleep in the grave: it will watch, even while

the wretch is dying, to secure the honour of God, and gather courage for a fresh attack just by the dying pillow. And the agony of its first onset in the unseen world, hard by the place of dying, devils cannot know. For they have never spurned a dying Saviour, and they have never died.

But all the embrasures that can be opened upon the soul by this moral avenger must be closed, or its eternal thunders will be heard and felt. Yes, even here the heart sometimes says to conscience, as Satan to the Saviour, "Art thou come to torment me before the time?" But it is the conflict of desperation, and, like the murderer who came into close and terrible embrace with the man whose blood he would spill, and was heard to say, "You must die," and with that saying put forth a thrust that forced the dagger to his heart; so in assailing conscience, to put down its spirit of admonition, it must be assailed *desperately*, and if the victory cannot be otherwise secured, it must be drawn to the crater, where the wretch stands to torment himself, and to be hardened by a view of its fires; and here may perhaps end the conflict, till it is renewed again on the other side of time. Now there is but little left for the sinner to do. Conscience has ceased its admonitions. But still he has a slight conflict.

5. With the *institutions of the Gospel.* We noticed in his conflict with the law, which spreads abroad its troublesome interference with his lusts and his pleasures, how readily he could contrive to evade its claims. But the Gospel, like some faithful party in the field of blood, still keeps up the chase, and deeply wounds at every shot. It proves not so easy as was apprehended to still this avenger of justice. It pursues the sinner close through all the narrow lane of life, and even down to the gate of

hell, unless sovereign grace effectually interpose, or long injured mercy say, "*Let him alone.*" But see the ungrateful struggle of the sinner to cast off this fastness of heaven—this Gospel of salvation. Every church-going bell fills his conscience with guilt, and each return of the day of rest reminds him of the quiet of his paternal roof, where a mother's prayers used to be joined with the Sabbath day, in rendering the time of rest too holy to be endured. He must pervert its holy design, or writhe and bleed under the lashes of a guilty conscience. If he can get some scene of iniquity open, to prevent his soul from thinking; if the theatre may be opened, or any other house of death, or he may sport himself with the pleasures of the turf, and thus kill time, and throw off this one additional fastness of heaven, and put himself afloat upon the sea of life, then he can be comparatively happy, boasting like the school boy's kite,—

See how yon crowd of gazing people
Admire my height above the steeple;
How would you wonder, did you know,
But what a kite like I can do?

It tugged and pulled, while thus it spoke,
To break the string; at last it broke;
Deprived at once of all its stay,
In vain it tried to soar away;
Unable its own weight to bear,
It fluttered downward through the air;
Unable its own course to guide,
The wind soon plunged it in the tide.

Thus it will not fail to happen to the immortal being who shall try to do without the Gospel. He may go off from God, and despise the power that would pull him back, but he will go to wander amid the blackness of darkness forever!

Had I time, I would go on through the whole catalogue of restraints, and show how, one by one, the sinner wantonly throws them off. But I can notice only one or two more particulars.

6. The hardened sinner would dislodge himself from all thought of heaven or fear of hell. And yet these are very powerful ligatures, and often the last to be sundered. When men think of relinquishing heaven, they sometimes forget that awakening previous question, "If I abandon the thought of heaven, where shall I then be? What means that worm which never dies? What mean those chains of darkness—and that gnashing of teeth—and that quenchless fire?" Ah! when the sinner is arrested by such questions, and must answer them, and answer them, too, under the operations of the Holy Spirit, he will find it hard work to answer them and sin on. The throes produced will be like those of the second death; and whoever has tried, will not need again to ask what is meant by the undying worm. That eternal separation from the society of the good, and that imprisonment with the devil and his angels, if it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder, when only anticipated,—what will the reality be? I am scared at my own question. It will be a death that never dies—a living death! But,

7. There is still another thought. The sinner must have broken through all the restraints of *public sentiment*, before we can know how bad he would be; and this ligature he tries to snap asunder. But he will find that public very populous, before he gets through. After he has gone his round with mortals, and has learned not to care what *men* think of his conduct, he must cease, too, to care what is thought of his deeds, in heaven. Those beings that have kept watch over his pillow by night, that have warded off fire and pestilence, or waked

him in time to flee, that have loved his father and mother, and love them still in heaven,—what will they think of the puny worm who has brought himself to despise them, and sport with their opinion? But even this is not all; for devils, too, have their opinion. And he must cease to care what they think of him in hell. And their judgment, remember, is not depraved like their hearts. One might almost as well attempt to silence the opinion of heaven as of hell. The murmurs of that dark world against the man who casts its burning sentiments behind his back, will be like the distant roar of a thousand cataracts, or like the dashing of as many icebergs conflicting with each other in some boundless polar sea. And,

Finally: there yet remains to be noticed one of the most powerful motives of restraint, *the domestic affections.* It is impossible to guess what men would be, till they throw off the hold, for instance, that a mother has upon a profligate son. We must recollect how John Newton managed, and how miserable he was while a mother lived, to hold the cord entwined about his heart. When every other tie had been sundered, the mother kept hold of him by this,—when his character was gone, when he had descended to the meanness of serving a black mistress, and of eating his morsel from her leavings—when her favour was life to him, and her frown filled him with despair, and he had no other friend—then he remembered a mother's counsels and a mother's prayers; and then and there gave his heart to the Saviour. There, from Africa's dark soil, and from a condition and character darker still, he first lifted his eyes to heaven, and began to breathe eternal life: and he lives now, and sings redeeming grace in heaven, and tells in every song how hard it is for a sinner to conflict with the restraints of infinite love.

But all these are a part only of the circumstances, the restraints, that go to modify human character; all of which the sinner deliberately strives to neutralize. And if in nothing else he has shown a character bad as language can describe, or actions prove, he has given a climax of the whole in his attempts to sunder all such ties and cut himself loose from God, and from the whole family of kindly influences that would save his soul from death.

Such is the obstinacy, the rebelliousness, the ingratitude of the sinner. Must he not, then, be born again—have a new heart and a new spirit—or never enter into the kingdom of God.

SERMON XLIII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEST FRIEND AGGRIEVED.

Ephesians iv. 30.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

If I must doubt whether there be a trinity of persons in the Godhead, I should question the inspiration of the Scriptures. The distinct personality of the three that bear record in heaven, seems to me as plain a truth as any other in the whole Bible, and cannot be rejected without the danger of going into infidelity. In the mysterious division of the work of redemption, it became the business of the Holy Ghost to make the sinner willing, in the day of God's power, to renew and sanctify the heart, and quicken to spiritual life and action, the dead in sin. And after he has begun eternal life in his people, he dwells in their hearts, and is there a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles under the title of the Comforter, and has exerted his agency in every conversion since there was a church, and been the guide to heaven of every child of the apostacy, who has gone and took his seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If there is in any mind a heavenly thought, or in any heart a holy volition, it is all the work of that divine agent. Hence his favour is life. One had better grieve every friend he has, and wander homeless, and

die deserted, with none to watch him or pray for him, or bury him, than to grieve the holy Spirit of God, and be abandoned of him.

I have supposed that grieving the Spirit of God, was a deed that none but Christians can do. The enemies of God may *resist* his Spirit, and may *quench* his Spirit, but his people only can grieve him. So it is, you know, in human affairs; an enemy may insult us and offend us, a *friend* it is that grieves us.

It will be my object to show how the people of God may grieve his Spirit, and what the consequences that must follow.

I. *How may the people of God grieve his Spirit?*

1. When they *limit his ability* or his *willingness* to bless them. The Spirit of God has done so much for them already, that all cause of fear, as to what he can do, and will do, if they are ready, is out of place. It was a great sin in Israel, after they had witnessed the wonders done in Egypt, and had seen the water of the Red Sea divide, to make them a passage, to have any doubt whether he could enable them to subdue the Anakims, and whether he would give them water to drink and flesh to eat.

But that people, when they limited the Holy One of Israel, had not seen more illustrious displays of the might and the mercy of their Deliverer, than have the people of God in these days, of the amazing power and grace of the Holy Ghost. He who could subdue your hearts, ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, what can he not do for you? He who could awaken you, when you was purposed in your heart that you would never see the danger you was in; who could uncover to you the destruction that way-laid you; who could convict you of sin, of

righteousness, and of judgment to come, when you had carefully barred every avenue that would admit the light; could bring you to a Saviour's feet, and make you his willing captives; what is there now that he cannot do for you? What lust can he not conquer, and what foe of yours can he not bring to the ground and lay low at your feet? How can you doubt a moment of his ability and his mercy, to guide you, and keep you unto everlasting life?

And after the precious instances of revival that you have witnessed, and the power displayed by the Holy Ghost, in subduing to love and obedience the basest of men, and bringing scores of the ungodly to yield to the force of truth, and become willing in the day of God's power; how can you doubt but he can give you other precious revivals, and renew to you the scenes you have witnessed, and more yet? What other proofs can he give but that which he has given. that you have only to be ready and he will do his wonders before your eyes, till you are satisfied? And there is no sinner you pray for but he can be melted and subdued, and moulded over into a humble and devoted and heavenly-minded Christian? And his willingness to operate is commensurate with his ability. If he would help *you* when you felt that you could not do without him, and give those tokens of his mercy that you felt that you must have or die, why will he not do the same again? If you have sinned, and do not deserve his interposing mercy, so you had when he did interpose the last time. When you prayed for that child that he did save, you went to him as a poor sinner, not deserving at all the mercy you asked, and why not expect that the Spirit of God will as readily operate now as then? Why then should we limit, and thus grieve the holy one? If such has been the power

and the mercy of the divine operations in days past, that the highest faith is due, and there is the broadest foundation for confidence that the Spirit will operate as soon as we are ready, why should Christians grieve him by limiting his power and his mercy.

2. They grieve him *when they expect their comforts from any other source.* The people of God often try to be happy without him. There are so many channels through which joy is communicated to the heart, that we are prone to forget its source. We may, by this means, be guilty of an idolatry, though not as gross, yet as offensive to the Spirit of God as the temporary worship of Mammon or Moloch. This is the case when even means of grace are trusted in as sure to communicate comfort. We may idolize the ministry of reconciliation, the Sabbath, the ordinances, the place of prayer, and even the closet. In young converts nothing is more common than the deep assurance, that the same place, the same practice, and the same pew, will produce the same blessedness. And often it is not till after many a sore disappointment, that they are taught to repair immediately to him whose influence is life and peace. God would have us estimate the means, and set a price as high as he has upon every medium of holy joy. But when we forget, as we are prone to forget, that we must go a little beyond the watchman, before we shall find him whom our soul loveth; must pass through the means and *there* is joy, and *there* is God, then is the Spirit grieved. His divine agency is undervalued, and the joy he would communicate is withheld, till we are made to feel that the Spirit of God must operate, or every means must lose its influence.

3. It is equally true that we grieve the Spirit of God, *when we neglect the means of grace.* There is an es-

tablished process, by which the Holy Spirit of God ordinarily comforts his people. *Almost* all his *joys*, and probably, did we know more fully the way of the Spirit, we should say *all* his joys are bestowed as a blessing on the means of grace. Here he exerts his divine influence. He lifts the soul toward heaven, when the soul makes an effort to rise in prayer. He pours in truth upon the mind, when the mind is labouring to know the truth. He generates holy affections, when he discovers in his people grief for sin, and ardent desires to be more holy. Hence the house of God, rather than any other place, has been the scene of his most frequent and his mightiest operations. Here he has fed his people, has cheered their despondencies, has raised their hopes, has strengthened their faith, has enabled them to mount on wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Here, with a preached gospel, the word of his grace, that truth through which it was the prayer of the Saviour that the Father would sanctify his people, he has, in every age, since there was a Christian church, shed forth his richest, sweetest comforts. Here, too, he has awakened and renewed the sinner; has begun in the heart that eternal life which it is his promise, and his oath, shall be carried on till the day of complete redemption. Here all our precious revivals have begun, and have been carried on, by what has been termed the foolishness of preaching.

And God has greatly blessed the place of *prayer* and *conference*. These unnoticed retreats have been, in thousands of instances, the scenes of such divine display as have made angels glad, and have multiplied the number of the saved. Christians have dated their very best comforts in some of these consecrated retreats. In answer to prayer, every comfort has dropped from heaven.

The heart has been warmed in the concert of prayer, beyond almost any other place. Those hours nearest akin to heaven, and the most deeply engraved upon the memory and the heart, to be the subject of everlasting recollection, and of delightful mention in the anthems of heaven, have been those where pious hearts met, and were melted together at the foot of the cross—unless it be those seasons when the soul was alone with God, while there were none to disturb and none to share the sacred joy. Perhaps no comforts can outweigh these. Hence the closet is that most sacred and most lovely place which the believer is the last to quit, where he would live and die. There the heart discloses its most secret concerns, delivers its most confidential message, and waits for forgiveness and for peace, with a hope that takes hold of the horns of the altar with the iron grasp of death.

If, then, God has thus blessed the means of grace, and they are rendered by his appointment so essential to the soul's transformation into the image of God, the Spirit must be grieved when they are neglected. Their neglect develops unbelief, and, what is more, contempt. If the Spirit operate, he must choose his own way. We must throw ourselves within the probable reach of his influence, where he has blest others, and where he has promised to bless us. And not only be there *occasionally*, but as often as we feel our need of his special influences. David resolved to pray seven times a day, and Daniel three *times* in the day, even when he knew that it would be likely to cost him his life. Christians cannot lightly dispense with any means of grace and not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption.

4. Christians grieve the Spirit of God *when they neglect to make use of the promises.* These were given

for the comfort of God's covenant people, were indited by the Holy Ghost, and are the principal medium through which he communicates to the heart the richest blessings of his agency. Here the Christian must apply when he needs support, and he will find the promises wonderfully adapted to his circumstances. If he feels himself to be a great sinner, here is a promise of forgiveness; "I will blot out thine iniquities, and remember thy sins no more." If he feels himself to be weak and defenceless, the promise reads, "Fear not thou worm, Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth: and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. One shall slay a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." If darkness come over his mind, and it ever becomes at length tangible, like the night of Egypt, still the promise reads, "He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." If he fears that he may perish amid the dangers that surround him, he may read and be comforted, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." If there come an hour when temptations seem too sharp and frequent for his strength, he can read and feel safe. No temptation has happened to you, but such as is common to men. And God will, with the temptation, make also a way of escape. Now the child of God offends the divine Comforter when he does not thus apply in the hour of distress to the promises he inspired.

5. The Spirit of God is grieved *when the promises are misapplied.* When the promise of forgiveness, for instance, is used before we have repented; when the promise of perseverance is made to comfort a backsliding believer, when any thing that God has said engenders a hope of heaven, while the affections are earthly, sensual and grovelling. When the *unbeliever* takes sanctuary in the mercy of God; and when the Christian hopes to be comforted any where but on the way of life, there is offered equally an insult to the Spirit of grace. The gracious things said in the book of God are all *appropriated* in their promulgation. The meek only will he guide in the way and cause to inherit the earth. To the poor in spirit belong the kingdom of heaven. They that mourn shall be comforted. To those only who keep his covenant and his testimonies, are all the ways of the Lord, righteousness and peace. Those only who trust in the Lord and do good shall inherit the land, and shall verily be fed. Those shall know the Lord who follow on to know him. Those shall find him, who seek him with all their heart.

After the same manner are all the promises appropriated, and may neither be neglected nor misapplied. Hence every man who would not grieve the Spirit of God, should make it his *first* question, What is my character? and his *second*, What kind thing has God said to me? or his *first* question, What is my condition? and his *second*, What promise reaches such a condition? Then, to use the emphatical language of Scripture, the dogs do not eat the children's bread. There are times, I apprehend, when the real believer may not apply to the refreshment of his soul a single promise, but must let the Bible lie by him, as the offending child, faint and hungry, may take no refreshment from his father's table. He must suffer

and fast till he is humbled. The promise is ready for him, and God will refresh him with it, when he has brought him to feel that he must die without it. To this spot God delights to bring his people, when they sin. His kindness is thus the more timely and the more welcome.

II. I am next to notice the *consequences of grieving the Spirit.* These will appear,

1. *In the absence of Christian consolations.* When we have grieved the Comforter, how can we hope that he will bestow his comforts? When he has brought his blessings to our doors, and we treat him with contempt or neglect, he will leave us to pore over our miseries, and perhaps, to howl upon our beds. How striking a feature is this in the history of God's people, recorded in his word! David grieved the holy Spirit of God, and we hear him complain at the noise of the water-spouts. Deep calleth unto deep. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over my soul. He wet his couch with tears. All his bones were out of joint. God broke him with his tempest. He was made to bear the iniquities of his youth.

And how well has all this accorded with the experience of God's people in all the ages since, when they have grieved the Spirit. He withdrew his consolation. They fasted, and prayed, and wept, and God hid, as it were, his face from them. Wearisome nights were appointed unto them. They looked toward death with gloominess. Toward heaven they cast the fearful glance of abandonment. They clinged to the covenant as a drowning man to the plank floating by him.

2. When the Spirit has been grieved, it appears *in the withering of the Christian graces.* The Spirit of God is the grand agent, by whose influence every holy

affection is nourished. Hence his influence upon the heart is compared to the rain, on which nature is dependant for all its beauty, and all its fertility. Let the showers be withholden, and how soon will every field and every garden wither! How soon will the sterility of death cover the face of creation, and the veriest Eden be converted into a desert! How will the plant wither, and the landscape fade, and culture become useless when there no longer falls the timely and refreshing shower! So faith, and love, and hope, all fail, when the Spirit of God has been grieved. There can neither be seen the humility, nor the heavenly-mindedness, nor the spirit of prayer, nor the watchfulness, nor the meekness, nor any of the other graces which stand out to view, when the Spirit of God is operating. The life-giving breeze does not blow upon the garden, causing the spices to flow out. The Christian, when he has grieved away the Spirit of God, becomes, for the time being, merely a decent worldling, rising but one small degree above the man who was never born of God. His lamp, if it may not be said to have gone out, dies away till it casts hardly a ray of light into the darkness of this revolted world.

3. When the Spirit is grieved, one of the effects is *the loosening of the bonds of Christian affection.* This affection originates in love to Christ; hence, if that love decays, all the affections that depend upon it, suffer a correspondent decay. Christ is the head by which all the limbs are united, and live and act in unison. He is the vine. Amputate the branch from the vine, and it immediately loses its connection with all the other branches. What is the *believer* to *me*, when I have no longer any interest in him who is the believer's life? Now if there be not, and this is not pretended, a final abandonment of the covenant, still if covenant engage-

ments are disregarded, and he whose agency it is to see the covenant ratified, withholds his influence, why expect any union among those whom it was intended to bind? Sink the believer down into the man he once was, and why expect of him that he will wish any other than ungodly men for his associates? The union of God's people to each other will ever bear an exact proportion to the growth and vigour of their piety. Hence, in the absence of the Spirit's sanctifying influence, there decays, with the other graces, love to the brethren, and the ligature is sundered that holds together the family of the faithful. Hence all the discords, the divisions, and the broils; the hard names and the angry feelings, that have sundered believers.

4. *When the Spirit is grieved the Christian becomes a worldling.* Losing his heavenly hopes and his celestial comforts, there remain none but earthly hopes and creature comforts. The Christian is not only made to differ from the man of the world at the first, by the agency of the Spirit, but this difference is continued by the same agency. Just like a weight suspended in the air, he sinks the moment he is not supported. The graces which the Spirit generates makes the difference; these suspended and the resemblance returns. Clip the wings of the dove, and what is she but a reptile? She must tread upon earth, and gather her food in the dust. The man is not willing to be destitute of comforts. If he may not eat the bread of heaven, he hankers after the leeks and onions of Egypt. When the first king of Israel found that the Lord did not answer him as aforetime, he sought to the witch of Endor for the guidance he needed. The Lord's people are a miserable set of beings, when the Spirit has departed from them. They will need, to make them happy, all the worldly prosperity

they had before, and more yet, and will covet it as eagerly as the man who has never risen with Christ, nor has ever learned to seek those things that are above.

5. When God's people have grieved the Spirit, *he ceases to multiply their numbers by the conversion of sinners.* He has so honoured them as to operate in answer to their prayers. I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to bless them. When Zion travails she brings forth children. God works by means; and when the people of God become backsliders, the means cease, and the work of God is stayed. He thus puts honour upon his people; makes them the instruments of doing him service, and has himself the pleasure of rewarding them. They would be less happy if God had given them no opportunity to labour in his service. Hence, when they have grieved the holy Spirit of God, and he has withdrawn his influence, and as a sure result, they have lost their relish for his service, he suffers sinners to sleep on and perish. It is considered an established matter of fact, that God *does not*, and the presumption is that he *will not*, revive his work, till *his people* are revived, and are ready to be workers together with God. Believers then are urged not to grieve away the divine influence, by all that a soul is worth, and by all that a multitude of souls are worth. And if, in an evil hour, the Spirit has been grieved, they are urged to repent, and humble themselves at his feet, by all the importance that could possibly attach itself to a precious and extensive work of God, among the ungodly around them.

REMARKS.

1. *Believers can do nothing that is at the same time so great a calamity and so great a crime as to grieve the holy Spirit.* They feel the injury first themselves,

in their languishing graces, and their loss of comforts; in their beclouded prospects, and their diminished hopes. Nor would it be a conjecture wholly groundless, that they may be affected in their interests forever, by every season of relapse. They may be thus rendered lesser stars in the firmament of God forever. And how many souls may perish by the deed, we cannot know, till the season of action is past, and the character of all around us formed and finished, and their destiny about to be fixed.

2. Let me say that *God's people may easily know when they have grieved away the divine Spirit.* He will carry away all his comforts with him. They will be happy in none of those things that once contributed to their joy. There will be no communion kept up with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. All intercourse with the throne of grace will be interrupted, and darkness will come upon the believer as soon as he begins to pray. No matter when he attempts the duty, the place will be dark. There will fall neither rain nor dew. The heavens will be brass, and the earth iron under his feet. And the circulation of a heavenly influence between him and the family of believers will be interrupted, and there will be a suspension of Christian fellowship. And there will be no visions of heaven. There will cover the sun of righteousness a cloud, dark and black as midnight. The believer will now grope his way as the blind do, and stumble at noonday as in the night. Those horrid falls, that have crippled and half destroyed the children of God in all ages, have happened when the Spirit had been grieved away. David and Peter had grieved the Spirit when he left them to stand in that critical hour alone. The spouse in the song had grieved him away, whens he

went about the streets inquiring, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"

There is but one source whence come all the believer's comforts, *from* the influence of the divine Spirit. Hence, if he is grieved, the spring of his consolations is dried up, and he must as assuredly famish, if this fountain is not again opened, as the word of God is true. Hence it would seem that the believer can easily know if he has done this disastrous work; can know by the poverty and misery, and desolation of his soul; by the total absence of all those consolations that used to be brought to him by the operations of the Holy Ghost.

3. *On the conduct of believers depends the welfare of the world.* If on them it depends under God, whether the multitudes of the ungodly continue to throng the way of death, then it cannot be denied that they can withhold, or can put forth an agency that affects the weal or the wo of a world. While then you sleep—ye redeemed of the Lord—while you sleep, and your graces droop, and your character suffers, and your lamp goes out, there lies around you a depraved and prayerless multitude, who are forming a character for the pit, and pursuing their way down to the prison of hell, to the blackness of darkness forever.

4. *It should then be the wish of the men of the world, that God's people live near to him.* They sometimes imagine that it is better with them when believers let down their watch and become like themslves. Then their consciences do not reproach them, and they have not such fearful alarms, as when the people of God come out from them, and are separate. Still they never make a more fearful mistake, than when slumbering on the brink of ruin themselves, they wish all around them to sleep also. If it is their horrid purpose to keep their stand on the brink

of death eternal, they should be as wise as the Macedonian, and appoint *one at least* to stand at the door of their dormitory, and cry, day by day, Wake, O sleeper!

5. *Hence the propriety that Christians should often inquire of themselves, whether they are acting a kind part toward the ungodly.* What was said in Israel, in a time of national calamity, may apply, in a time of the withdrawment of the divine influence. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." I have frequently thought of this text with pleasure, and have styled it a recipe for a revival. I have thought it a pity that any Christian should live without a knowledge of this precious part of the word of God, it is found in 2d Chronicles, vii chapter and 14 verse. Not only is the Minister of Christ set to watch for souls, but, in a very important sense, *every believer* is a watchman, and cannot sleep, but he endangers the souls of men. Instead of this, it should be his object to keep every conscience around him alarmed, till the lost are all seen flying for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. They may not sleep while there is one lost sinner within the sound of their voice. If believers would not bring blood-guiltiness upon themselves, and calculate by and by to complain to God, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over my soul," then they should not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. There hangs in the vigilance of God's people, an amount of interest that outweighs the wealth of a city, and the wealth of a world. Their responsibility is greater than the out-guards of a camp of soldiery, when, if one sentinel should fall to sleep, it might cause a whole army to perish.

6. But in these circumstances, *what can the Christian do to recover his former condition?* Why, just what de did when he first found himself a lost sinner—repent. "But," says the poor benighted and comfortless soul, "How can I repent without the influences of the Holy Ghost? and I have grieved him away." Then here you are my brother, at the mercy of God. Lie down and determine to die, if you must, full in this conviction. The churches' hope of you is wholly in the provisions of the covenant. I will turn you to a leaf or two of that covenant: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Here it reads, you see, "*I will* be their God and *they shall* be my people." He does not intend to let his people go. They would, if he would let them, and perish every soul of them, even after he has forgiven them, and they have been permitted to gaze upon the glories of the Lamb. Let me turn you to another leaf of that compact. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, *that they shall not depart from me.*" On another page of this covenant, it reads, "My salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." And there is one other page, if possible, still more precious, "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." I will read you one other line of that wondrous compact, which God has made with his people, and leave you to read and ponder on the residue: "If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him,

nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Thus are you shut up to the covenant mercy of God, and here is the safest place to leave you. If you have been his children, and have grieved away his Spirit, still his unbounded mercy can reach you. He can restore to you the joy of his salvation, and then uphold you with his free spirit.

SERMON XLIV.

TERMS OF DIVINE ACCEPTANCE.

Acts xvi. 30.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?

Paul and Silas, in the faithful discharge of their duty, found themselves at length immured in the dungeons of Philippi. There they lifted up their voices in prayer and praise; and the prisoners heard them; and what was to them of far higher importance, God heard them, and sent his angels to deliver them. The bars of their prison were sundered, their doors flew open, and their bands were loosed. The result was, a deep alarm fastened upon the mind of the prison-keeper, venting itself in the language of the text, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Now the gospel aims to bring *every man* to the very spot where that man was brought, and then direct him to a Saviour and to heaven. There must be alarm, because there is danger, unless in those, perhaps very rare cases, when a Saviour is embraced, or rather the heart prepared to receive him, before the danger is fully discovered. Unless we see our danger we shall make no effort to escape from the wrath to come. And men will have so soon slept the sleep of death, and alarm be of no avail, that humanity requires every possible effort to wake them.

Hence no curse can be greater, than a ministry calculated to keep men secure in their sins. At no other point does there await you so much danger. Your servant may be idle, and your steward defraud you, and your best friend betray you, and still you may suffer but a temporary loss; but if he who is the mouth of God to you, deceive you, put darkness for light and light for darkness, your loss may be irreparable.

In the report of that gospel which the Lord Jesus Christ will approve at his coming, the text must be fully and correctly answered. The sinner must know exactly the terms on which God will accept him. One may have some general notion that he is a sinner, that a Saviour is provided, and that possibly he may have life through that Saviour; and still be so much in the dark relative to the terms of acceptance, as to miss of eternal life. The mere fact that a Saviour died, if fully known, is not sufficient to secure salvation. The bare atonement, if there be no application of it to the soul, will avail nothing. Christ fulfilled the demands of the law in behalf of all who, in the appointed way, shall become interested in his blood. But if this atonement be neglected; if we listen to a gospel that on this point misdirects us; and we do not become qualified to enjoy salvation, it will no otherwise affect us, than as an aggravation of our condemnation. My plan will be, *to show what is not adequate instruction* on this subject, and *what is.*

I. I am to show *what is not adequate instruction on this subject.*

1. When men are urged to *a reformation*, as what will put them into the way of life, the instruction is inadequate. If men quit their grosser iniquities, and become decent and civil, still no promise of heaven

reaches them on this condition merely. Where in the gospel are any such terms stated? I know that men are obligated to break off their sins by righteousness, forthwith. John directed some bad men who came to him, to cease from violence and become honest, and contented: but John did not mean to leave them here: hence did not say, that on these terms Christ would receive them. These were rather the conditions, on which they could be prepared to receive his instruction to advantage. If I should meet with a drunkard, or a thief, and they should ask me about the gospel, the first lessons I should give them, would be on the subjects of sobriety and honesty. Men are sometimes too far gone in the by-paths of death, to give the gospel a candid hearing, and learn what the terms of salvation are; and then the first lesson given them may have respect to their waywardness; and when the gospel has gained this footing, then you may tell them of salvation to advantage.

But there may be this external reformation, and there often has been, while yet there was no preparation of heart to receive the Saviour, but sin was loved, and rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. Men may quit their sins from motives of interest or ambition. Gross iniquities are scandalous and expensive, and may be abandoned from the supreme love of something else beside Christ.

The fear of the wrath to come, while yet there is a prompt and a total alienation of the heart from God, may induce men to break off some habit, that threatens their sure and speedy perdition. But there is not a text in one of the pages of inspiration, that exhibits this superficial reformation, as the condition of pardon and accceptance through a Saviour. The young man that

would know what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life, was civil and decent, and still was unfit for the kingdom of God, and was sent away very sorrowful. It will not be denied but that he had become a moral man, but he still loved supremely the good things of this life.

2. When men are directed, not merely to break off some of the grosser iniquities, but *to perform some of the mere external duties of piety*, the instruction given them is still inadequate. The very same motives that led to the one, will often lead to the other. The very same man, who would cease his profaneness, and his Sabbath-breaking, and his lewd song-singing, and his drunkenness, and his midnight revellings, because he had become ashamed of their vulgarity; will have prayer sometimes in his family, and will attend upon a preached gospel, and have a Bible in his house, and read it occasionally, because all this is civil and decent.

And sometimes this cheap and superficial religion, is the high way to preferment. Men will be to some extent religious, if they can obtain character by it, and can make it a stairway to office, and influence and wealth too. They will bow and cringe to men, and God too, if they may obtain suffrages by it. Men will consent to be any thing, if it will make them great in the life that now is.

And they will perform duties, in hopes to gain heaven by this means. If God will excuse them for hating his law, and character, and government, they will attend upon his ordinances, and pay an outward respect to his Sabbaths, and repeat their creed, and rehearse their prayers; and account it a cheap salvation. And this it will be found is not an unusual resort of ungodly men. In every period of alarm, away they fly to Christian ordi-

nances. So in the darker times of Israel, they would steal, murder, and committ adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and then come and stand before God in his house. And it is declared in that case, that they trusted in lying words that could not profit.

God has never spoken of this external attention to religious things, as the terms of acceptance with him: for there may be still an evil heart of unbelief. The prayers uttered by the lips, may neither have their source in the heart, nor throw back upon it the least impulse to piety. They may not even engross the thinking powers, but may be in the ears of Jehovah like the prating of the parrot. Men have no doubt uttered prayers, while the hostility of their hearts, could they have been conscious of it, to the God invoked, and the Saviour whose name was used, would have driven them from their knees, and sealed up their lips in the sullenness of perdition. And the Scriptures have been read, while the heart quarrelled with every doctrine and duty they enforced. And ordinances have been attended, and Sabbaths kept, and charities given, and confessions made, while there was the deadliest hostility to all that is holy in God, or purifying in truth.

3. If you add to all this *a profession of godliness*, the instruction given is still inadequate. In professing godliness, men often add perjury to their other deeds of wrong. A profession is not unfrequently the very climax of their impudence, and their daring. Ah, how mistaken have ministers and churches been, in supposing that when they had persuaded the ungodly to enter professedly into covenant with God, they had secured to some extent the object of the gospel institutions. They have not unfrequently lived to see their convert a more

daring sinner than previously, to his hypocritical adoption of the covenant; and have been grieved that they had not left him without the enclosures of the fold. They brought him up to sealing ordinances, sprinkled clean water upon him, and made his lips touch the consecrated symbols of a dying Christ, but the heart remained a mass of moral putrefaction; and the sacrifice offered was but a smoke and a stench in the nostrils of an insulted Saviour. They painted and varnished the sepulchre, while within it was full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. It is many a time obvious, that so far from there having been any thing gained, by thrusting the worldling into this religious atmosphere, you have but the more effectually blocked up the last avenue to his conscience, and thus placed him perhaps beyond the reach of hope and of heaven.

But suppose if you please the very best case, and tell me if in this visible transformation, the Lord Jesus Christ will see any thing that he will consider a compliance with the terms of life and salvation which he offers? And I have left out of view the question whether it *be right* to do so? Whether without the bidding of Jesus Christ, we may thus administer his holy ordinances to unsanctified men? Are we in such a procedure, honest to souls? is now the question. May we encourage them thus to compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, and walk in the light of their own fires? Are *they* safe or *we* honest, while we watch no better the gates of the sheepfold? The press that men make toward sealing ordinances, is a proof that they are uneasy and unhappy, and if we grant their wish, do we answer honestly and fairly the question thus silently put to us, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Do we not rather seal them up to a perpetual

stupidity, and shall we not have to answer for their blood, in the day that inquisition shall be made for it?

II. Having thus endeavoured to show, what *is not* adequate instruction on this subject, I proceed to inquire, *what is?* In stating the terms on which the sinner can become interested in the Lord Jesus Christ, I should choose to say;

1. *He must explicitly avow his approbation of the law he has broken.* Here begins, under every government, where there has been revolt, the exercise of a right temper. Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. This declaration is found on the very title page of his gospel. Repent, said he, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And what is repentance, more or less, than a cordial approbation of the precept that has been violated?

Hence the language of penitence in all ages has been the same. "The law is good, its penalties just, and its whole design benevolent. God had not been kind, had he given us any other law, or been willing that it should be broken with impunity, or had affixed any lower penalty, or accepted any meaner sacrifice than his own Son, as the atoning Lamb. O, I am a wretch for having broken this law, and can offer no possible plea that shall excuse or palliate the smallest deviation from its precepts. If God should cast me off forever, he would but treat me as I deserve to be treated, and expect to be." Thus the sinner takes to himself the punishment of his sins, and thus places himself in an attitude, where Christ can begin to notice him, and still be the friend and patron of the divine law.

With this principle we are all familiar. The child sees you pouring your frowns upon his disobedience, and would be glad if you would agree with him in repro-

bating the precept he has violated. But your authority is lost, and your child ruined, if you cease to frown, till he confesses that he has broken *a good law*. Then, and not till then, can you relax the sternness of that countenance, which frowns upon his disobedience. The teacher places the rebellious child at his feet, and he must be there, till he confesses the precept just, that he violated. And the same principle is acted upon in all governments that admit of pardon.

So the Lord Jesus Christ, if he would not do a rebellious world incalculable mischief, must suffer the sinner to make no approach to him, till he is grieved for his transgressions or has avowed his full approbation of the law he has broken. Then he can be saved, and the law of God be sustained.

Now the whole of repentance may be summed up, as I suppose, in this retrospect of a humbled sinner, upon his guilty and inexcusable violations of a good law; including however his abandonment of the transgressions which he disapproves. Thus is performed one of the conditions, on which the Lord Jesus Christ, will receive us to his favour, and wash away our sins in his blood.

2. *The sinner must become willing to owe his escape from the curse of the law to Jesus Christ.* One may know that he has broken the law of God, and that the law he has broken is a good law, and still be too proud to receive pardon on the terms of the gospel. We have known cases when men have starved and perished rather than receive alms. The pride of their hearts would not suffer them to eat the bread they had not purchased. And men have gone down to hell, because they would not cast themselves upon that Saviour, whose help was seen to be necessary, in order to their escape from the wrath to come. Not merely must the sinner see that he is perishing, and that there is no

help out of Christ, but he must become pleased with Christ, else he will not feel himself secure in his hands, nor apply to him for life.

It is believed that many a soul has perished, hesitating whether it would be prudent or safe to cast himself upon the Saviour. To do this is faith, and implies that already the temper of the heart is changed: but all men have not faith. It is by no means certain that awakened sinners have faith. Some may have; for none can say how early in the process of alarm God may renew the heart. But of this we are sure, that when renewed, it is prepared to believe, soon after the character of Jesus Christ is presented.

Sinners often wonder, and sometimes quarrel, that on making the inquiry of the text, the answer we give them implies a new heart; whereas the inquiry they intended to make was, how they should *obtain* a new heart. They wish to know how they must operate, with their evil hearts of unbelief, so as to have them renewed. Now to this question we can give no answer. We know of no process by which an ungodly man may work himself into the kingdom of God, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. We can tell them to do nothing, that does not imply holiness; and if we should, they might do as we direct them, and *still be lost;* whereas they ask us, what they must do *to be saved.* If to this question they wish an honest answer that will do them any good, we must assure them, that having been brought to approve of the law they have broken, they must also approve of the remedy provided, must commit their souls to Jesus Christ. These conditions can never be altered.

3. When faith has accepted the atonement, and sin is forgiven, *there must be a life of obedience*, as that which can alone express the soul's continued approbation

of the law that has been violated, and the remedy that has been provided. Repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, are not exercises belonging merely to the first stages of piety, and to be then done with forever. The man who is born of God continues to hate sin, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ till he dies. He does not give the law one approving look, and the Saviour one welcome to his heart, and then relapse into his former impenitence and unbelief. He renews his repentance day by day, and as often makes fresh application to the blood of sprinkling, for pardon and acceptance. His whole life, if he honour the religion he professes to embrace, is filled up with obedience to the law, with sorrow and tears for having broken it, and with the testimonials of a cordial approbation of the atonement made upon the cross.

We know nothing of that religion, which, after taking root in the heart, can lie dormant for years, and produce no transforming influence upon the man, conforming him to the truth, or moulding him into the image of Jesus Christ. God will not forgive sin, and take away the curse, and enter into an everlasting covenant with the transgressor; and then permit him to go into exile from his presence, and be again an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise; and live without hope and without God in the world.

He calls in his elect, only in time, however early, to fit them for his presence in glory. And the work of grace goes on from that time till death. They aim at a perfect obedience to the divine law, and go from strength to strength, till every one of them appeareth in Zion before God. They forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those things which are before, and press toward

the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Hence there cannot be any very long suspension of those exercises, which are essential at the beginning of a course of piety. The heart continues to be penitent, and believing and obedient, till all sin is removed, and grace is perfected in glory. I close with

REMARKS.

1. *Let us compare all this with what is sometimes termed the gospel.* How wrong and how ruinous is the advice, that not unfrequently is given to the unregenerate.

We have known when pains was taken to prevent men from becoming alarmed, so as to put the question of the text with earnestness. They must not hear that the heart is desperately wicked, lest they should fear that in all their deeds they have broken the law of God. They must have no suspicion that their prayers are deficient, lest they should see their need of a Saviour. They must be told nothing of hell, lest they should be afraid of its torments; nor hear of election, lest they learn that men will not accept of mercy, till they are made willing in the day of God's power.

And thus every doctrine, calculated to pour honour upon the divine law, and reflect correspondent shame and reproach upon the transgressor, must be disproved, or concealed, or neutralized; and that perhaps by the very men who have been sent as the heralds of salvation to a lost world. We have seen them afraid, lest without design, they should effect some alarm among the foes of God. Hence the monstrous abuse of that text, when any hard truth had leaked out; "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that

accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Ten thousand consciences, that had been pierced with truth, have thus been healed slightly, by a text which God inspired for far other purposes. But when no soothing opiate would answer, and the sinner could not be prevented from alarm, we have known advice to be given that was the most ruinous possible.

We have known when awakened sinners have had suggested to them a train of thought calculated to chase away all alarm, by lessening their respect for the violated law. It is pleaded that they have misapprehended their guilt; that the law is not so severe as they imagine, and moreover, that the mercy of God will not allow him to punish sinners forever. What parent, say these tender hearted instructors, would cast his child into a quenchless fire? Will God punish eternally the errors of a few years? God will be moved by their tears, and will pardon them, if indeed their grief has not *already* done away their guilt. Thus their anguish of heart is all soothed, while yet there is no repentance.

We have known when the awakened were told, that they were in a fair way to obtain religion, that they must persevere, and hold out, and they would do well. But unhappily their way was the way to death, and they did persevere perhaps, and their alarms were soon gone, and they are seen in the broad way, or are gone to know the full weight of that curse of the law which once hung over them. Had they been told that there was nothing holy in their terrors, and that they were still insecure, till they applied by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, they might have obtained eternal life. They should have known, that they had *not overrated* their danger, nor half estimated their guilt, that God *was* angry as they supposed, that there *was* a perdition, as deep, and dark,

and hopeless as they feared. Then there might have been a prospect that they would flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.

The case is said to have happened when they have been directed to a novel, or a party, to chase away their glooms. A journey in the country, or a visit to their friends, the song and the dance, have been considered a better specific for their pains, than the atoning Lamb of God. Let it be, that these are extreme cases, still means like these have often been resorted to, in order to do away alarm, and soothe the waking conscience. But it will wake again in the day of death, and gnaw with a still keener appetite from the day of judgment onward.

Finally, any instruction given awakened sinners, that they may comply with and still perish, is cruel and treacherous. Say to them as Paul did, and you are safe, and they too, if they follow your advice. And they will be as likely to do their whole duty, as any part of it. Christ will bless only that intruction, which comes up to the standard he has given us. O, let not the lips, that should pour out only truth, that should help the sinner to a full acquaintance with his sins, and press his conscience, till he shall feel that he cannot do an hour without Christ; be employed to stop the progress of conviction, and through a mistaken tenderness, bind up the rankling wound, ere the probe has reached its centre, or it has disgorged its putrescence. When the sinner, under the management of the Holy Ghost, is in a fair way to become thoroughly convinced of his misery and his ruin, let not the work be arrested in its progress, and the ear be assailed with the sound of peace, till heaven is once made sure.

The prodigal is alarmed for his life, and grieved almost to distraction for his baseness of conduct, and has

his face turned homeward, but a being meets him, pretending to be his father's friend, and sent to guide him in the way to his house, and bears him into a hopeless and returnless exile! He casts a veil over the filth and rags of the vagabond, tells him of his native virtues, admonishes him to make one more effort to live without his father, and the wretch believes, and turns his face from home, and perishes in his profligacy. So many a sinner, just at the moment when he began to think on his ways, when his sins were staring him in the face, when there was seen distinctly the countenance of an offended God, and when there began to be some thought of repairing to a Saviour, has been misdirected and destroyed.

Instead of saying as St. Paul did, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," we set about making him happy in some other way. He must mend his life, and send up some prayer, and wait at the pool, and hold on his way:—Yes, all this would be well, were he now a believer. But the misery of the case is, he is yet unsanctified, his heart is set in him to do evil, and the controversy between him and God, is yet at its height. He must stop and turn back, or lose heaven. He yet knows not enough about his sins to render a Saviour welcome. He still dares to stand on the margin of perdition, and has a disgust for holiness and heaven so implacable, that he will risk all the danger he is in a little longer, rather than give his heart to Jesus Christ.

Tell him now of waiting God's time, and attending on the means; when God's time has gone by these thirty, forty, sixty years, and means have had no effect all that time! Ah, I am afraid you will amuse him till his day of mercy has gone by, and he perishes in his bondage. The manslayer is fleeing from the avenger

of blood, the road before him parts, a post is erected, and a board on it, on which is written in large capitals,

REFUGE ☞

while the finger of a man's hand points to his course. He can only read a single word, and must run while he reads. If he stops to breathe he perishes.

Now such is the office of the gospel ministry, when it comes in contact with a sinner anxious to flee from the wrath to come. It can lose no time in directing him to the Lamb that was slain. It must urge him to a place of safety, and when the danger is over, then tell him of means, and urge him to prayer, and press a reform, and build him up for heaven. I proceed to a

2. Remark. *We may gather from this subject a reason, why revivals of religion in some instances, add so little to the strength of the churches.* The lax instruction sometimes given to awakened sinners at such a time, even by well meaning men, who aim to be faithful, tends to nourish a growth of piety, that is sickly and effeminate, and will finally add but little to the vigour and beauty of Zion. I know that if souls are converted they will get to heaven, and blessed be God if he will convert them, but their usefulness in this life, much depends on their early instruction.

Let the doctrines be kept hid from those who are coming into the kingdom, and let there be detailed only that soothing, indistinct, and sickly instruction, which has been noticed, and the converts, when made, will go halting along to heaven, and the church and its ministry have very little comfort in them, or help from them.

They will scarcely know *what* converted them, whether truth or error. It was truth, I know, for God sanctifies through the truth; but there was so much

mingled with it as to render it, in their own view, doubtful which produced the effect. And having associated the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals, with so much indistinctness of doctrine, they will be likely ever after, to court this same darkened exhibition of the gospel, and finally die before they shall have learned what truth is. And while they live, they will be liable to be driven about with every wind of doctrine, and vex the church, and embarrass the ministry, and pass perhaps from one denomination to another, and finally be saved though as by fire.

They will be doubtful *who* converted them. They were told when under alarm, to do many things toward their own conversion, and they did them, and they were finally converted; but whether they did it themselves, or whether God did it, they find it hard to tell. And they will give others the same darkened counsel that was given them. Thus God is robbed of the glory due to his name, and the churches filled up with members, who will hang a dead weight upon every revival that shall happen in the church, till they are taken up to heaven, and taught there what they should have learned that same week in which they were born of God.

And they may never find out in this world, what they were converted *for*. Men will be active in duty, only as they are rooted and grounded in the truth. In all men, truth, or what they think is truth, is the spring of action. Hence some whole churches, in this day of Christian enterprise, can be brought to do nothing; and the reason is, because they know nothing *distinctly*. If you could enlighten them, they would act, but they will not be enlightened. The secret is, they were born in a dark, misty, and debilitating atmosphere, and they

choose to live and die in the same. Let some good man who knows and loves the truth, go into one corner of such a society, and there be active and faithful a few years, till the Christians know what they were born again for, and that corner of the church shall be, from that time, worth all the rest, in any labours to which God shall call his people.

I know not but that we have here *one*, and that not a very inefficient cause, why so many ministers have been quarrelled away from their people, immediately after some great revival. The faithful and laborious servant of God had gathered into the church a multitude of converts, and expected much from them, but had not prepared them to be useful; and when at length he urged them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, they contended with him. If any should consider this a bold suggestion then I hope they will make a happier one, and take away this reproach from the churches. I cannot believe, that a revival of religion, effected by the Spirit of God, under a distinguishing gospel, will tend to unsettle its ministry. But I can easily believe, that one who knows and loves the truth, may hold it back in a time of awakening, to the incalculable injury of those who are born again, and at the risk of his own sudden removal from his flock. He is afraid to give them strong meat, and feeds them with what he terms milk but which proves to be poison, and they wither under it, and he is punished for administering it. Thus is fulfilled that inspired adage, "He that will save his life shall lose it; but he that will lose his life, for my sake, and the gospel, the same shall save it."

Finally, let me say to lost men, haste your escape to Jesus Christ. You stand in imminent danger of perdition every moment. Your ruin is nearer, and your guilt,

far greater, than you ever conceived. That sinner that has been the most afraid, has never been half enough afraid, of the wrath of God. It burns to the lowest hell, and when you fall beneath it, your courage will all be gone in a moment. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?"

You see what the terms are, and God will never alter them, on which you can be accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the best, and the only terms that could be offered. They secure the honour of the divine law, the glory of Christ, and the eternal life of the sinner. They are humbling terms, and to reach the case they must be.

Now will you stand quarrelling with the truth till you perish? Is this the right course for a sinner? You thus harden your heart, and sear your conscience, and provoke your doom. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." May God bless his own truth, and make it a fire and hammer to break in pieces the flinty rock. Amen.

SERMON XLV.

CHRIST CONDUCTS TO HEAVEN A HOLY PEOPLE.

Titus ii. 14.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

More than eighteen hundred years since, we were visited by a stranger from a foreign world. Two questions were immediately agitated. Who is he? and What his errand? He settled them both; but they have come up, again and again, to the present day. A previous discourse had a bearing upon the *first* of these questions, and the text now before us will require us to attend to the *second*. It is selected, you will remember, from that very book which he left with us, on purpose to answer every inquiry that men would need to make respecting himself and his mission. We learn in the context, who it was that thus gave himself for us, "The great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ."

My readers are aware, that the same men, who deny that our Saviour Jesus Christ, is the great God, differ as widely from the apostle, relative to the part he acted for us. They would allow that he was commissioned to make known to us the will of God, especially the fact of a resurrection, which nature did not reveal, and establish Christian ordinances, and set us an example of virtue. That his death was vicarious, or a

substitute for our condemnation, they would generally, and I presume universally deny.

Now, if we need a Saviour to do more for us than this, then we need, not the one they offer, but whom the apostle exhibits to our view in the text. If my sins must be atoned for, if an evil heart of unbelief must be removed, and when sanctified, I must still be accepted through the merits and the righteousness of another; then I need a Saviour to do more for me than teach me truth, and give me ordinances, and be my pattern in virtue.

Had my ruin consisted merely in having lost a knowledge of God and duty, an angel might have become my instructer, and his example would have answered me the same purpose, as that of the Son of God. It would have seemed in that case wholly unnecessary, that God should be manifest in the flesh. But if the whole *heart* was faint, as well as the whole *head* sick; if there hung over us the curse of a broken law, and we were so alienated from God as to be content in perpetual exile from his service and his fellowship; then both instruction and example, if nothing more were done, would be wholly lost upon me.

What can it avail to present truth or exhibit purity, before a mind that disrelishes moral beauty, unless provision is made to subdue the aversion of the heart? And even then, how could I be happy with the curse of a broken commandment pendent over my head? O, give me such a Saviour as Paul describes, or when all is done, there is left undone the main thing requisite, to my obedience and my blessedness. If the Lord Jesus Christ came merely to instruct me, so did the prophets and the apostles; and their example, had their hearts been perfectly holy, would have been all I needed on

this point; and thus either of them might have been my Saviour as really as he who is now frequently exhibited as the only Redeemer.

If I must be content with a Saviour, who is merely my schoolmaster; I am led to ask, Why so much said of him previously to his advent? Did prophets anticipate his approach many thousand years; and martyrs hang their hopes on him so long; and angels announce his ingress, soon as the time was out; and spent the night by his manger; and a voice from heaven name him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; and was this mighty personage, who so long held a world in agonized suspense, merely some teacher coming to do for us what any man, if commissioned, could have done as well? Is Jehovah accustomed thus to pour honour upon a creature, sent on an errand no more grand than this?

> "Is ocean into tempest wrought,
> To waft a feather, or to drown a fly?"

No man can have a very deep sense of sin, and not feel his need of having done for him more than all this. He who owes ten thousand talents, and has nothing to pay, will need a Saviour who can take that debt upon him. He who has drawn upon himself the denunciations of his Maker's law, will need a Saviour to bear that burden for him. He who has a carnal mind, that is enmity against God, is not subject to his law nor can be, will wish a Saviour who can subdue that heart to loyalty and duty. And he who, after all this is done, dare not hope for heaven, unless taken by the hand, by some mighty Prince, and led every inch of the way till he is within its threshold, will inquire if no such Captain of his salvation is provided? And he will open his Bible,

and read a single sentence, and there, the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, for whose appearing to judge the world his people are looking, is the very protector and friend he needs; "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The text furnishes a natural division of thought, and will need the aid of no numerical distinctions.

Who gave himself for us. His presentation at the altar of justice, as our victim, was his own act. He is not seized and bound, as the barbarous nations secure their victims, willing or unwilling; nor comes to the altar as Isaac did, not knowing where the lamb was for a burnt offering. He had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again. *Not merely was he given*, although this was true, but *he gave himself.* And it was not merely his *time*, and *strength*, and *patience*, that he gave, as instructers do, but his life. How easily could he have blighted all our hopes in that dark hour. Had he sent Judas to his own place, or rendered him an honest man, when he came to steal the betraying kiss; or had he struck lifeless that midnight band, that came to apprehend him; or had he let down into hell that senate chamber, with its mass of hypocrisy; and paralized the sinews of that soldiery that crucified him; then had there been none to betray, arrest, or murder the Lamb of God. And he had all this power in himself, else he did not *give himself.* He who goes to death without his choice, by a power, human or divine, that he cannot control, cannot be said to lay down his life: his life is taken from him.

But the Sufferer of Calvary, when he left the bosom of the Father, had his eye fixed, and through his whole life kept it fixed upon the scene of the cross, as the

finishing act of his humiliation, and felt not that his work was done till he yielded his life. Hence, while it is true that the *Father gave his Son*, it is equally true that the Son *gave himself*. He was as voluntary in *redeeming* the world, as in the act that *built it*.

Who gave himself *for us*. Here each word has meaning. Who are we to understand by *us*? Not Paul himself and the good brother in the gospel to whom he wrote, merely. If another apostle may decide, the Lord Jesus Christ was "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." I have no wish now to enter the list in that controversy, which never should have been among brethren who hold the Head, whether the atonement, as distinguished from redemption, is *general* or *limited*. Those who do not distinguish atonement from redemption, must limit it, or avow the salvation of all men; and those who do thus distinguish, may with propriety make atonement general, and still are not accountable for a consequence, which is made to follow, not on their principles, but that of their opponents.

Is there not a common ground, where those who love the truth can and must meet? Neither of the parties, to whom I now refer, assert, that God has purposed or will accomplish the salvation of all men, through the atonement of Christ; nor on the other hand, will deny, that the atonement places the human family at large, in circumstances happily differing from that of devils. To men there go out overtures of mercy, to devils none. But does it not follow, that if mercy is offered, and the offer sincere, salvation is possible; that is, the obstructions are removed on the part of God, that would have kept men from heaven, even had they repented? and this is precisely what I understand

those to mean, who make the atonement general. The death of Christ rendered it possible for God to save, without dishonouring his law, or weakening his government, as many as it should please him to sanctify.

And what is the force of the preposition, *for* us? Can it mean less or more, than that the death of Christ was a substitute for our condemnation? this idea is certainly consonant with the whole drift of revelation. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed:—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all:—for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." Thus the griefs, and the sorrows, and the wounds, and the bruises, the chastisements, and the stripes, all fell on him by substitution, and were borne instead of the everlasting miseries of hell, which we must have borne, had he not offered himself as our ransom.

The apostle proceeds to make known to us the design with which the Saviour gave himself for us, "*That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us.*" There are here included pardon, and sanctification.

First, pardon. The sinner can neither be considered as redeemed from iniquity, or purified, while his conscience is polluted with unpardoned sin. He is still under the curse of the law, has the brand of infamy upon him, and the badges of death around him. Hence, when he believes, and pardon can be administered, without injury to the divine government, his cleansing from the defilement of sin is begun. There is a text in one of the minor prophets, which though spoken with reference to the church, is beautifully expressive of this first act of God's mercy to sinners. "Who is a God like

unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage! He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighted in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" And in another text it reads, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." And we have the delightful idea of forgiveness in this text, "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." The very first act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, secures this blessing, and we stand, though not on the same footing as if we had never sinned, yet the same as relates to our exposedness to the penalties of the law. The transgressions of the law, that had been minuted against us in the record of the divine mind, are blotted out. God even speaks as if he would forget them, and never suffer them to come into his mind again.

But pardon, as rich a blessing as it is, to a sinner made sensible of his gross and dreadful departure from God, holds a place second in importance to that of sanctification. Hence to *purify us*, was an important part of the work which the Lord Jesus Christ came to do for us; by which I understand, delivering us from the power of sinful affections. This is done through the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, and is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as the Spirit acts a part in the economy of redemption, subordinate to that of the Mediator, and is spoken of as sent by him. He takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works,

Christ is formed in his people the hope of glory; his image is impressed on the heart; and the lineaments of that image are drawn out to view in deeds of loyalty and duty.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ brings his people to feel like him, to love his character, his law, his government, and kingdom, and all the duties of piety, and benevolence. And his purpose and promise is, that where he has begun a good work he will carry it on, till all moral pollution is eradicated. Thus the character of man, under the transforming influence spoken of in the text, is changed, till, in a moral point of view, he is no longer the same man. From being a child of wrath fitting for destruction, he becomes an heir of God, and a candidate for glory, honour, immortality and eternal life. The desire to be holy, and so like his Master, becomes his ruling passion. In his estimation conformity to God, in the whole temper of his mind, is the greatest good; and no hope gives him such a joy, as when he can say with confidence, "Then shall I be satisfied when I wake with thy likeness."

While the followers of the Lord Jesus are thus under a process of sanctification, they become, as a matter of course in a world like this, *a peculiar people*. They have desires, and hopes, and enjoyments, and fears, and aversions, such as are found in no other people. They have another employment, and form other habits, and sustain new relationships, and enter new society, and in their speech and demeanour, embracing a thousand nameless things, become a peculiar people. Whatever pains they may take to conceal their peculiarities, they become and continue like no other people on the face of the whole earth. And the more they act in character; the nearer they live to their Master, the more sure are

they to widen the contrast between themselves, and the world of the ungodly. Hence the world will soon know them, and break from their fellowship, and cast out their names as evil ; and Christ will receive them, and be a God unto them, and they shall be his people.

They are *zealous of good works.* Here perhaps more than at any other point is seen their peculiarity. The promptness, the pains, and the sacrifices manifested in doing good, render them the perfect contrast of any thing seen in the habits of unsanctified men, Hence the fact is not to be disputed, that the personal efforts, and charities that have been expended upon human misery, degradation, and contempt have been the efforts and the charities of this peculiar people. On the list of this world's benefactors their names are arranged alone, and the catalogue will tell to their advantage in that day when the Saviour shall be heard to say, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

The ungodly may have fits of charitable feeling, when provision is to be made exclusively for the life that now is ; but their charities do not usually extend in their effects beyond the grave. When urged to enlighten those that know not God, or snatch from death those that have not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; they lack the faith that can give importance, to these religious and spiritual realities. And yet here, where the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, is the very spot where the godly display their warmest zeal, and make their best, their mightiest efforts. The zeal of God's people is uniform and extensive, and does not, like "crackling thorns

'and burning coals, make a great blaze and die." It grows out of the combined influence of the Christian affections, or rather *is* the Christian affections concentrated, and pouring out their energies upon the object of their commisseration or praise.

Christian zeal aims to render this world what God would have it; to draw it back, from alienation and misery, to subjection and enjoyment. It would cure every species of plague and suffering, and render holy, respected, and happy every child of the fall. And when *men* need not its aid, would compassionate the animal creation, till not a worm should suffer. Thus will operate the zeal that piety begets, and thus the redeemed of Jesus Christ, will be rendered, in a world cold and friendless like this, a peculiar people.

There is still another thought in this text, which though *last* is not *least*. These redeemed, and peculiar, and zealous beings, Jesus Christ is said to purify *unto himself*. I see a very precious thought here; they belong finally to him. They were given him in the covenant of redemption. Hence we hear him say, in that remarkable prayer just before he suffered, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." And lest any should draw a wrong inference, from the fact that as Mediator he was a recipient, he addresses the Father again, and says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." His people are to be his associates forever; his family; his friends; his admirers, and his worshippers. "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

There is something in this thought which to me bespeaks the Saviour divine. Were he a mere servant, were he less than the very builder and proprietor of this

world, he could not have been given a commission of such a nature, as to entitle him to possess, and call his own, the beings he should save: else it would not be true, that the Eternal cannot give his glory to another. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, came to redeem to himself, by his death, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. I close with a few paragraphs of

EXPOSTULATION,

With such as cannot relish this mortifying gospel. I am fully aware, and lament it, that every position taken in this discourse is controverted; and my apology for the view I have given, is, that I could in honesty give no other.

Man's lost and desperate condition, requiring an atonement, is found, in one shape, and another, on almost every page of the Bible, and his safety depends on knowing it, and the gospel was sent to acquaint him with it; hence this must be a radical truth in every message which we carry from God to man. Moreover, we see men exhibit that temper, and form those habits, which would teach us their ruin, if we had not been taught it from heaven. Now a truth that comes to us so confirmed, we must receive, and must proclaim; and if men will not believe it, or if they do not choose to lay it to heart, we can only say with the prophet, "If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." If you can keep your apostacy a secret from your fellow-men, or from angels, or from devils, do; and if you can hide the shame of it, do; and if by such a course you can escape the dire consequences of that apostacy, do. We wish you safe, and wish you happy, and if you know of a *safer* or *happier* course than this gospel presents, you have but to make the experiment. But then remember, if your experiment fails, and you do not find

out your ruin till death, you must not calculate, that your mistake can then be corrected.

If you are conscious of some depravity, and still cannot make up your mind to owe your redemption to the death of Christ, then you must reject the Bible or explain it as you can. The text says he gave *himself* for us. And we hear him say, "I lay down my life for the sheep." And many scriptures that have been quoted, and more that might be, seem evidently to put his blood in the place of ours, and heal us, if we are ever healed by his stripes.

Why object to the idea that he died for us. Does it too much degrade and blacken the human character, that we must thus come as it were to the place of execution, and have the halter about our neck, and there stand and see another take our place, and hang upon the tree in our stead? I know it will be the everlasting disgrace of our world, that we should have so conducted as to render it necessary that Christ should die for us. But it will deepen our disgrace, if we deny the fact, and assign some other reason, not the true one, why the Lord of glory was hanged on a tree. We shall then crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

If *his* was not a vicarious death, why did he die? Do you answer, "Death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned." Then it seems you make him a sinner? But the good Book assures me, that there was no guile found in his mouth. Satan came and found nothing in him. He was a Lamb without spot. Do you say that he died to finish out his obedience? Obedience to *what law?* Does the law of God require that his perfectly obedient subjects should die? or is death there made the wages of sin? I see no demand for his death, unless he died *for us*, or was a sinner. If you are not driven to the same alternative,

and can invent a third reason, more satisfactory, you must adopt it, and make the Bible bear you out in it if you can.

Do you object to this gospel because it requires that you be *purified?* Then it seems you doubt whether sin has polluted you? And if so why have any gospel? or you choose to carry all your moral deformity with you into the grave, and into eternity? and if so, then we understand you. You have only to let the gospel alone then, and let others, who would not choose to die in their sins, have the benefit of its overtures.

A gospel that shall not render men holy, can be worth nothing. It may gather, and baptize, and cast the senclosures of a covenant, about a congregation of wordlings. but if it have no purifying effect, it will leave them still the children of their father the devil. They will be as fair candidates for perdition, when such a gospel shall have exerted upon them its mightiest influence, as when its first accent broke upon their ear. But a gospel like that which Paul preached, must urge the claims of the divine law, and press men to break off their sins by righteousness, and turn their feet to God's testimonies. It will gather motives to holiness from all worlds, from the fear of hell, from the hope of heaven, from the comfort of the present life, and especially from the love of Christ; for it will "thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Now let us be prudent enough to have this very gospel, or none. If we wish merely to be amused, let us not employ a gospel to do it, but the pipe, the timbrel, and the dance. If we care not how much pollution adheres to us when we are judged, then let us cast the gospel and the whole Bible from us, and enter into a covenant

with death, and make an agreement with hell, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

But you dislike the *peculiarity* urged upon believers in the gospel. You wish not to be singular, and be cast out of the world while you remain in it. Well, we simply say, that there can be no gospel gathered from the Bible, that does not urge it, nor Christian character without it. If the truth must render men holy, it must, in a world like ours, render them *peculiar*. In two respects the good man, from the moment he is born of God, becomes unlike the men of this world. All the features of depravity that are cast from his character, and the features of holiness ingrafted on it, will tend to render him peculiar. Thus in two directions will the difference widen, and will go on extending through time and through eternity. To produce this peculiarity is the very design of the gospel; for men by nature are unlike God, and the gospel, when it produces its legitimate effect, renders men like God. Hence, unless it sanctify all men, or the regenerate are taken immediately to heaven, it must introduce into society a peculiar people. If you are offended with this peculiarity, then you need not put it on. You can live in this world without it, and you can die without it, but you cannot live in heaven without it.

That *zeal* begotten in his people by the grace of God, constitutes I know the most offensive feature of their peculiarity. But God's people cannot be without it, and please him. And he has never promised to render his people what the world can admire. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore shall the world hate

you." You need have nothing to do with this people, or imbibe their zeal if it offends you. There is current a gospel, and you can attend upon it, that pours out against this zeal the whole torrent of its invective. It would nourish a cold philosophical religion, that shall never reach or warm the heart, that will have but little to do with prayer, or praise, or holy feeling, or heavenly aspiration, or effort to save souls; or take away, in any shape, the curse that has lighted upon this dark world. You can take your pew under such a gospel and never be urged to zeal and engagedness. But where it will conduct you, may demand a doubt. Not to heaven surely, where they cease not day nor night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." There must be great zeal where there is such perpetual worship. *Day and night!* O, how such zeal as this would be lashed and scouted in this cold and cheerless world!

But the gospel of Jesus Christ aims to make this world as much like heaven as possible; would beget all the zeal they have there, and all the industry, and all the celestial fire. We hide not our wish, to render men in this world as much in earnest in serving God, and blessing his creatures, as they are in heaven. And, sure as you breathe, you have never seen a zeal like that in heaven. It was not in Paul, nor Peter, nor Brainard, nor Whitefield, nor Martin. And if you have ever once seen enough any where to offend you, depend upon it you could not stay in heaven an hour.

Finally, it offends you, that the Saviour should be the proprietor of the church he purchased with his blood. You would have him an agent, a prophet, a messenger; you would not allow him to own his sheep; you would make him an insignificant subject of that kingdom he

purchased with his blood. And why this *zeal* to degrade him? Did he not earn the kingdom with his stripes, and his wounds, and his sweat, and his dying agonies? And did he not build the very world in which he has set up this kingdom? The apostle thought proper to speak of his purifying *to himself* a peculiar people.

And why not let them *be his?* Are *you* afraid to be his? Would it grieve you to be a member of his family, and have a seat at the supper of the Lamb? Well, dear friend, there will come a day when you will be afraid, if you are *not* his. When he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and all his holy angels with him, and the last trumpet shall have waked you from the sleep of the grave, then "he that believeth shall not make haste," but all others,—oh, with what hurry and confusion will they quit their sepulchres! and with what untold anguish will they call upon the rocks and mountains, to fall on them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! Will you not then wish that you were his?

Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, did it ever occur to you how precious a thought this is. You belong to this very Lord Jesus. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." How safe and how happy, if he can make you so! and you have no fear but he can. Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. You will see him come directly to gather you, and you will hail him as he comes, "My Lord, and my God." My soul casts in her lot with you. We glory in belonging to Christ, and look wishfully toward that hour, when we shall see him as he is and be like him. Then, almighty Redeemer, then shall I be satisfied when I wake with thy likeness. Amen.

SERMON XLVI.

CHRIST MUST HAVE HIS OWN PLACE IN HIS GOSPEL.

Luke ix. 20.

Whom say ye that I am?

ADMITTING the fact, that men may speculate correctly, while their hearts are unsanctified; or to some extent *in*correctly, after they are born of God; still it is a general truth, that men will be, in their moral, and in their religious character, corrupt or correct, in the same proportion with their creed. If on any important subject they believe a lie, their false faith will present to their hearts wrong motives of action, and lead to those affections, and that course of conduct, that is in opposition to the law of God, and the precepts of the gospel. But if men believe the truth, though it be not with the heart unto righteousness, still that truth may exert, at some future day, a sanctifying effect upon them, and the creed adopted, through the Spirit's influence, mould them into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if there is one subject, rather than any other, on which a serious man would guard the correctness of his faith, it must be relative to the character of the Saviour he trusts in for eternal life. It must be essential, that we put our trust in the very Redeemer that God has revealed; else how can we hope that he will acknowledge us, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

Can it be otherwise, than a very important thing. to the human family, to understand distinctly, *his* nature and character, in whom they are invited to take sanctuary from the wrath to come? Hence, to know that the gospel proclaimed to us, presents the very Lord Jesus, through whose stripes we must be healed, will be a question of minor importance to none, who calculate first or last, to turn their eye toward heaven.

In Christ's little family, this subject was early and earnestly agitated. Our Lord would not suffer his disciples to be ignorant on this point. "He asked them saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering, said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again." He then brought the question home to their own bosom, "Whom say *ye* that I am?" Said the prompt and affectionate Peter, "The Christ of God."

This subject is of high and increasing importance, at a period, when it is becoming so fashionable, to consider it of no consequence what we think of Christ. It will not be so much my object to exhibit proofs of his divinity, as to show, that whatever his character may be, it is important that we have correct views of him. I shall arrange my thoughts under three general remarks: The Lord Jesus Christ has a fixed and definite character: This character is plainly revealed: If we trust in a Saviour, having any *other* character than that revealed in the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ will not consider this trust as reposed in him, and we shall be in danger of perishing in unbelief.

1. *The Lord Jesus Christ has a fixed and definite character.* It would hardly seem necessary to state a proposition like this, much less to attempt to establish it by argument, as it contains in itself its own confirma-

tion. The scriptures have given this name to the promised Messiah, who, in the very nature of things, must have a character so definite, that he can be known by his name. But if the name may apply, with equal propriety, to one who is divine, angelic, or human, here it seems to me is the end of all knowledge on this subject. Place other subjects of revelation on the same footing, and we can only *guess* at any thing.

The very idea of a *revelation* implies, that there are truths revealed, but nothing is revealed, if revealed so indefinitely that we cannot arrive at knowledge on the subject. As well might the Bible have merely named the Saviour, if after all it has said of him, we can know *only* his name; especially if it be an equal chance, whether we shall conceive of him as one of the Three that bear record in heaven, or a worm of the dust like ourselves. If God has told me only the *name* of the Redeemer, and this is all the definite knowledge I can have of him, I may be so infatuated as to apply this name to a comet or a star, and affirm that God intended I should trust in *this* for salvation. If he has left it to my discretion to adorn the name, with attributes, such as I would choose my Saviour should possess, then is it manifest that no two might trust in the same Redeemer.

But there is an absurdity in the very supposition. Every thing that has being, has properties that are essential to its being, of which if you disrobe it, you take away its very essence. Thus it must be with the Lord Jesus Christ. You may call by that name a being, so divested of the attributes that belong to the Saviour, that he shall cease to be the Saviour God has revealed, and be as entirely another as if he had had another name. The identity of being is not in the *name* but in the *nature* or *attributes* that belong to it. I remark,

II. *The character of the Lord Jesus Christ is plainly revealed in the word of God.* We might infer this from the fact, that the Bible is a revelation from God; and that the principal subject of development in that Book is the Saviour. The Bible was given us to make Christ known, that we might take sanctuary in him from the wrath to come. Hence, to suppose that his character is left so indefinitely developed that we can know nothing with certainty respecting him, is to suppose God to trifle. There is an impudence and a daring in the very supposition that causes the mind to shrink from naming it.

Moreover on opening the Bible I do see the character of the Saviour, as definitively developed as any other of the subjects of revelation. I see distinctly his humanity, in that he had a body and a soul as men have. He hungered, thirsted, slept, was weary; could suffer, could rejoice; he spoke, and walked, and rode, and bled, and died. And I see as distinctly his divinity. He created all things, could make the bread and the wine that sustained him, could know the hearts of men, could heal the sick, and raise the dead, and give sight to the blind, and still the waves of the sea. And I will name one text, among many, in which he is predicted with all these characteristics: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here the same personage, who was a child and a son, is also the Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

But on this point I will only stop to say, that on no particular is the Bible more full and plain than on this.

On none of the doctrines or duties of religion have we instruction more definite. I may as well doubt what repentance is, and what faith is, and what love is, and what prayer is, as *who* Christ is. I can explain away the truth on any point as readily as relative to the Character of the Saviour. And moreover on every point the truth *has* been doubted, and mistakes as essential made, as on this point. Men who are not willing that the Bible should govern their faith, have missed the mark infinitely on *every* doctrine of revelation.

III. *If we trust in a Saviour having any other character than that given in the Bible to the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not accept this trust, as reposed in himself; and we shall be in danger of perishing* If Christ has a definite character, and he must have, or he can neither be known or trusted in; and if his character is revealed plainly, and this must be, or it is no harm not to know him, or to have erroneous views of him; then it must be essential that we trust in the *very Christ revealed.* If in these circumstances we believe him to be possessed of a character that he has not, if we invest him with attributes that he will not own, or detract from him the essential and eternal properties of his nature; will he pity our weakness, and own, as confidence in him, the trust we place in a Saviour created by our imaginations? This, it seems to me, is the fatal error which multitudes in the present day are persuaded to adopt. It has in its favour the plea of catholicism. We can thus fellowship the whole mass of nominal Christianity; and on the same principles can even go farther, and place the image of the Saviour in the temples of the gods, and embrace in one universal brotherhood, the whole multitude of idolaters that have ever bowed the knee at the shrine of devils.

On the same principle, that no harm comes to our piety from erroneous views of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can prove that God has been pleased with, and has accepted, every act of worship that has ever been paid to an idol. What is an idol, but the supreme so degraded that he ceases to be divine? and still not more degraded than is the character of the Saviour in many a modern creed. What was Jupiter, but Jehovah disrobed of his essential attributes. His worshippers did not reduce him down to a mere man. They gave him supremacy over the whole family of gods—allowed him to wield the thunders of heaven, and decree the destiny of nations. True, they did not give him a very pure moral character, but the best they knew how to give him. They invested him with some of the very worst of the human passions, and made him commit the foulest deeds of wrong and of outrage. But still, who can say, on the pinciple that it matters not what we think of Christ, that the worshippers of Jupiter were not accepted of the Lord as his own worshippers. If they called their great spirit by *names* that God has never appropriated to himself, this it will be acknowledged is a verbal mistake, a small matter, that God will not regard, in those who had not the means of knowing the names, by which he would choose to be invoked. But shall we go on and say, that as they gave their supreme deity the highest character they knew how to give him, although they did not invest him with the attributes essential to the true God, and made him finally a creature, in moral character base and deformed:—Shall we still say, that Jehovah was pleased with the spirit of their worship, approved their rites, and accepted their homage? I see not why, on the principles of modern catholicism, this reasoning is not correct, and why the whole herd of idolaters, in all ages, have

not been accepted of the Lord, as having intended to pay their supreme homage to him.

If what an apostle says of the Lord Jesus Christ be true, and "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist:"—if all this be true, I see not but those who give him a derived and dependant existence, alter the character as essentially, from that which the apostle gives him, as was the character of Jupiter distinct from that of Jehovah. What two things can be more unlike, than a Saviour who had no beginning of days, is self-existent, and almighty, could create men and build worlds; and one who himself began to be, is dependant, and has none but borrowed attributes. I do not see that the heathen Jove, and the God of heaven, differ any more.

If then the Lord Jesus Christ possesses one of these characters, and we trust in a Saviour who possesses the other, and the Bible has plainly revealed *him* in whom we are to trust, it hardly admits of a question whether we do not trust in another than the Christ of the gospel. It is not merely in the *name* of the Saviour that we trust, but in his attributes, in his qualifications to atone for us, in his power to sanctify us, in the credit he has in heaven to intercede for us, in his ability to subdue our enemies, and cover us with his righteousness in the day of retribution; but if he be not *God* as well as man, he has no such qualifications to atone, no such power to sanctify, no such influence to intercede, no such ability to defend, or righteousness to cover us; hence there is no such Saviour as him in whom we trust.

Agreed, if you please, that the error will be equally fatal on either side. Be it so that the Lord Jesus Christ is a mere attribute, an emanation, an angel, or a man; then do those who give him a *divine nature* make a mistake as great, as is made by their opponents, if he be, as the prophet asserts, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. If *he* be a mere creature, in whom God has directed us to put our trust for everlasting life; and that creature has power delegated to him, to pay the price of our redemption, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and we resolve to trust in a Saviour, who possesses divine attributes; we then rely upon one who is not revealed as the Saviour, and may have no more hope of acceptance, than those have if the opposite creed be true, who in their faith depress his character, as much as in this case we elevate it.

If the Lord Jesus has a fixed and definite character, has properties or attributes, of which if we disrobe him, we alter essentially his nature, and make him another Saviour; then the question is, whether those who trust in him, under these essentially altered characters, may all be said to trust in the same Redeemer? May a mistake like this be considered venial? If, too, God has given us in his word a plain and intelligible record of his will, and may not, as it seems to me, be considered as having described the character of the Saviour so indefinitely, as to render it about an equal chance, whether we shall conceive of him as human or divine; then must it admit of a serious doubt, whether any radical mistake can be made, without placing the soul at hazard.

God must have intended that we should have definite views of Christ; and if he has given us opportunity to

be correct, it argues positive wickedness, not to receive the truth of God in all its naked simplicity. If he has revealed a *divine* Saviour, we perish if we trust in one that is a *creature;* or if, *contrary to the light*, we believe him *divine*, then do we rely on some other, than that only name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved. No trust can possibly avail us, but that which is placed in the very Saviour whom God has revealed. Let me place the two Saviours in opposite columns, and see if an honest mind can make them one.

The one Saviour, was before all things, and all things were created by him and for him. He has the titles, possesses the attributes, does the works, and accepts the worship, that belong only to the true God. He invites sinners to him, as having in his own arm the power to save them, and promises them blessings, as having them of his own to give. "He that believeth in me shall never die." He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "With his stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The redeemed in heaven will forever ascribe to him, under the appellation of the Lamb, kingdom, and power, and glory. The dying believers may with Stephen commend to him their departing spirits. In the last day he will come in the clouds of heaven, with his holy angels, and will judge the world, and fix the destinies of all men; and be forever afterward adored, by the myriads of the redeemed, as the Lamb that was slain.

The other saviour, had a beginning of days, and either emanated from God or was created by him. He has divine titles only as men have, who are called gods; has only borrowed attributes, and a delegated power, and is worshipped only as kings and emperors are. We may not pray to him, lest we be guilty of idolatry; he promises nothing but as the Lord's prophet, and has no blessings of his own to give. We are not required to believe in him, but as we believe in Moses and John. He makes no atonement, but merely teaches truth, and is a pattern of virtue. He dies, not that we might live, and meets us again in the last day, not to judge the world, unless as a subaltern, but to *be* judged. He will wear no crown, and fill no throne in heaven, other than such as are promised the apostles; and will receive no worship but the respect due to an eminent servant of God. And if the dying commend their spirit to him they assuredly perish.

Now the mighty question is, are these two the same? Are they so the same that the trust reposed in the one,

will be accepted and answered to, if needs be, by the other. If but one of these Saviours is revealed, and but one exists, and we have put our trust in the other, are we still safe? Say we have cast our souls upon a created Saviour, shall we find at last. that we have an interest in that self-existent Redeemer, who comes travelling in the greatness of his strength, and is, independently on any extraneous help, mighty to save? If of the one it may be said, this is the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, will this be equally true of the other? I repeat the question, for it is to me a mighty one, Can it be of no consequence, to which of the two I look, and in which I trust for eternal life? Will the blood of *either* cleanse me from all sin? If the Saviour appointed me and distinctly revealed in the Bible, has life in himself, and the power of conferring eternal life on as many as the Father has given him; and I have trusted in man, and made flesh my arm, I fear it will not answer me the same purpose in the day of retribution, as if I had made application to the true, the appointed, the eternal Redeemer.

It is agreed, that if there be no Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the Saviour proffered is a mere creature, and we refuse to lean upon the appointed arm of flesh, and obstinately insist on having an almighty Saviour or none, our condition is deplorable. We shall then be without a hiding place in the day of our distress. If the Saviour be *God*, those perish who esteem him a *creature;* and if a *creature*, those perish who believe him *God*. One of the parties in this controversy is to lie down in everlasting sorrow, one only will be in heaven. Else two beings, the one *finite*, and the other *infinite*, are the same, and Jupiter and Moloch, and Baal, and Jehovah are the same, and the worshippers of idols, in

every dark place of the earth, may claim at last a seat in heaven, with Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets and apostles.

Can this be true? I see no radical error in the reasoning that has brought me to this result, and am led to ask, with all the seriousness with which a question ever dropped from my lips, am I safe in either case? Has the gracious Jehovah given me a revelation, in which he has so indefinitely described my Redeemer, that with all my anxiety to know, I cannot, whether he built the worlds, or was himself a part of the creation? whether the government is upon his shoulder, or he is himself subjected to the authority of his superior? whether he can bestow eternal life, or need to have his own life sustained by the power that breathed it? whether he will judge the world, or will stand to be judged, by a greater than himself, who shall then fill the throne? I shall be anxious for my soul till I know the truth.

O, will the blessed God give to a world like ours, already desperately ruined, a revelation of his will, and mock our helplessness, by asserting it to be so plain, that the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err, and still when I labour to know the truth with all my soul, I cannot find it!! But must either take this ground, or believe *myself* lost, or believe *those* lost, who I perceive trust in quite another saviour, than him on whom I rely. There is one thought that gives me relief, "Let God be true, though every man a liar." The Bible *is* a plain and intelligible volume; the Saviour's character is there definitely revealed; and we can learn *who* he is, and *what* he is, unless we choose to be deceived. May the exalted Jesus smile on this weak attempt to vindicate his character, and may he sanctify the men who would tear the crown from his head, and worlds from his rule; and

make his way known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations. May a great multitude, that no man can number, be redeemed to God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.

If asked the reasons why I consider this subject so important? and press it so vehemently? I answer,

1. *With the views I have of the Lord Jesus Christ, I consider him shamefully traduced by the error I have meant to expose.* It cannot seem to me a light thing, if the safety of souls were not affected, what men think of Christ; whether they give him the honour he had with the Father before the world was, or make him a weak and dependant mortal; whether they esteem him such that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, or the mere wandering Gallilean, who gathered his honours from the success he had in teaching truth and in making disciples. If we have given him our hearts, we shall not be willing to see him degraded. We shall wish him to retain all the titles that belong to him, and be owned in all the high and holy offices he fills, and wear in the view of men, all the glories that cluster round him in the view of angels. We shall feel ourselves so honoured, in being permitted to call him Lord, as to be greatly grieved when the tongue of slander, or the pen, dipped in the gall of depravity, shall attempt to degrade his nature or mar his honours. A Christian needs offer no other reason for vindicating his Lord, but that he loves him. But,

2. I offer another: *I consider souls endangered by a denial of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.* I cannot believe that when the Saviour has become a *man* or an *angel*, he will attract sinners to him, as when he has the glories on, that I suppose the angels see about him. Let him have the same character that he has in heaven,

and he will attract *men* to him, as there he attracts *angels* to him. If he be God, they will hope that he can save them; if he built the worlds, they will be the more willing to believe, that he built some happy world for them; and if he is at last to be their judge, they will feel it to be the more important, that they be washed from sin in his blood. I should not hope to win a single soul to him in a century, in the low, and mean, and dependant attitude, in which some professed ministers of the gospel, in consistence with their faith, must present him. I should expect them to sneer at the Nazarene, more than did Voltaire, or Hume, or Bolingbroke. And I do not believe, that under such a ministry, Christ is often embraced, or loved, or believed in. He may have some place in their creed, and may become a topic of speculation, and controversy, but in their religion, and in their hearts, I fear they learn to do without him: surely he is not formed in them the hope of glory.

3. *I would take a dying hold of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, because on the same principles by which the faith of so many have been unsettled on this point, every truth of God's word can be cast away.* Only suffer the enemy to have the ground, and hold it in peace, which he would take to drive you from this doctrine, and he will leave you nothing to credit, in the whole of divine revelation. He will tear you from the very horns of the altar, and sacrifice you, along with your Redeemer, on the threshold of the sanctuary of God.

When I must believe nothing that is above my reason, and that I cannot fully comprehend, I may not believe the simplest testimony of revelation. When, from the urgency of this principle, I can know nothing definite respecting the Lord Jesus Christ, I despair of gaining from the Book of God any definite knowledge on *any*

subject. Not the being of a God, or his government over the world, or the fact of a future judgment, or an eternal state of retribution, is revealed with any more definiteness, than the underived deity of Jesus Christ. I could reason them all away, and every doctrine and precept along with them, by the same sophistry, by which men would forbid me to offer my prayers to the risen and exalted Redeemer. I would then hold to the doctrine, because if I give it up, I must give *all* up, and throw my whole creed afloat, and myself afloat, to be drifted. I know not where, and shipwrecked, I know not upon what inhospitable shore, where await me, *death*, or *life*, I know not.

4. If you still ask me, why my zeal, in defence of the higher nature of the Lord Jesus Christ? I answer yet again, "*If it be possible*," *and* "*the very elect*" *should be cajoled into a doubt on this subject, it would do them incalculable injury.*

That doubt would *mar their creed;* for they must yield *other* doctrines, when their Redeemer has become a creature. That atonement, which he only could make; that ruin of our nature, which he only can repair; that ever-enduring hell, from which he only can rescue us; that Sabbath which his rising made; that Comforter, which he kindly sent; and that plenary inspiration of the scriptures, which establishes his divinity; must be all plucked from their creed, and it would stand then, like a pine, lightning-smitten, scorched in its every leaf, and rived to its deepest roots, to be the haunt of the owl, and the curse of the forest. When you shall blast my creed like this, you may have, for a farthing, the residue of my poor mutilated ible, and I will sit down and weep life away, over this benighted world, to which is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

It would *diminish their comforts:* for the same truth

that has sanctified them, has made them happy; and no truth more than the high character of their Redeemer. Take away this foundation, and what will the righteous do? Their hopes have been high, and their joy elevated, and their songs heard in the night, because they had, or thought they had, a mighty Redeemer. From this fact, they calculated to live out the assaults of temptation, and conquer their lusts, and hold on by some pin of the covenant, till they should plant their feet on the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem. Tell the church, that she has no such *almighty Redeemer* as she has dreamed of, and there will be tears in all her tabernacles, and I fear if there will be silence through half the choir of heaven, and the angels of God be afraid any longer to worship him.

It would *hurt their usefulness*. They have had high hopes, because they had a mighty Redeemer, and were active in duty, because they had elevated hopes. Sap these hopes, and you sunder the very sinew of action. Will they care to be sanctified, when they shall have learned that their Lord was peccable? Will they press on, to see him as he is, and be like him, when they shall doubt whether he will be known in heaven but by the nail-prints? will they care to invite others to him, when he is robbed of all the charms that attracted them in the days of their espousals? Will they pray with the fervency they have done, that the heathen may be given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, when they shall know that he is to rule by delegation, and does not come into the government but by heirship? Will they spend their perishable wealth to honour him, when they shall feel assured, that he has no incorruptible treasures with which to repay them?

How is it with those who have made the experiment,

and have delivered over their creed to be blotted and interlined, till the Deity of their master is gone, and every other truth that hung on it. Are they active for God? do they bless the heathen with the gospel? do they disseminate the Bible? do they press the consciences of sinners, in their daily walk, and in their evening visits, and give an ungodly world no rest, till they love their eclipsed and darkened and degraded Redeemer?

O, hide then this error from God's elect, and let them have the Saviour they are disposed to serve, till he take them up, and show himself to them in all the glory that he had with the Father before the world was.

I naturally close with the question, "What think ye of Christ?" This question faithfully answered by the minister of the gospel, will give you very much the character of his ministry; as it will define the Saviour he proclaims, and of course the success he has; and answered by the private Christian will give the character of his religion. I do not now mean to say that orthodoxy is piety, but simply, that the heart that has been sanctified through the truth, will apprehend and love the truth. In other words, faith will credit the divine testimony. Does the Lord Jesus hold in our ministry, and our creed, the high place that God has given him in the gospel? If we make him merely a teacher and a pattern, so was Moses and Paul. And if we feel that we need no higher Saviour, then is it doubtful, whether we have discovered more than half our ruin. If we have sunk no lower than that a finite arm can reach us, we have yet I fear to learn that we are sinking still, and that the pit is bottomless. A gospel that is the contrivance of men, will suit only those who have never felt the plague of their own hearts. When we shall have felt the full pressure of the curse that rests upon us, we shall feel the need of

one to save, strong as him that created us. The horrors of our condition will scare from us every deliverer, but him who can quench with his own blood, the fires that have been kindled to consume us. When we have looked once upon the incensed throne, we shall hail one as our high priest, who can go in and sprinkle the mercy seat; who can neutralize that consuming ire which issues from the countenance of a provoked Jehovah; one who has that influence in the court of heaven, that he can procure our acquittal, and can place himself in the van of the redeemed multitude, and conduct us up to heaven, and there plead his own merits as the ground of our acceptance, and the foundation of our everlasting blessedness. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

SERMON XLVII.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL CONJOINTLY SUSTAINED.

Matthew v. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

It is *then* only that the gospel appears in all its glory; when it infringes not upon the sacred rights of the law. One of God's institutions must not eclipse the glory of another. God did not make provision for the salvation of men, because he had become convinced that he had issued a bad law, and would thwart its design. The law stood in his eye as glorious, after men had drawn its curse upon th as when it dropt fresh from his lips amid the smoke of Sinai. When he instituted the law, he knew that men would break it; and he affixed his sanctions, sure that all our race would *incur* them, and many *endure* them. It was not an experiment, made without a knowledge of the result, but with the result provided for.

Hence the legal and the gospel dispensations, are but different parts of the same benevolent system; by which a good Jehovah, would bind to himself, and when the bond should be broken, would recover and restore to his love and favour, beings he had eternally designed should be happy. And hence our Lord thus early announced it as his design, not to abrogate but establish the law.

Fixed and stable as were the ordinances of the heavenly bodies, and firm the earth he had come to plant his feet upon, these should all pass away, while not a jot or tittle of the law should fail.

Accordingly, as the Lord Jesus gathered disciples, and freed them of course from the curse of the law, he still subjected them to it, as a rule of duty. He transferred, from the Jewish church to his own family, the very commandments which Moses wrote on the tables of stone. Not an item did he repeal, not a precept alter, not a sanction soften. And the whole gospel is a broad and lucid exposition of the law. Hence it is now as much the fact as ever, that "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in the things written in the book of the law, to do them." I shall state, in a few words, the error I would oppose, and which, as it seems to me, is in direct opposition to sound reason, and the whole Bible; and then proceed to illustrate the doctrine of the text, that *The gospel was not intended to supplant, but does sustain the law.*

I. *State the error.* The scheme is, that men by the fall, if not disabled, have become so averse to the law, that a *perfect* obedience is impossible; and that God will now accept of an obedience that is sincere. If men will obey the law, as well as they are able with their carnal mind, the temper which, without their fault, they inherited from their first parents, God will accept them; and wherein their obedience fails, the merits of Christ will be substituted. By this scheme, the death of Christ removes the curse of the law, from all men, soon as it lights upon them: for all *do render* to the law, the best obedience they are *disposed* to, and of course are safe, if they should live and die without repentance. It must be seen in a moment, that, if to whatever extent men

are *unwilling* to obey, they are *unable*, then all obedience, but that which *is* rendered, is dispensed with. And *none* is rendered; for a kind of sincerity, consistent with the most confirmed hatred of God, and his law, and which, for aught I see, devils may have as well as men, becomes a substitute for right affections, and has all the merit of a perfect obedience. The whole amounts to this; God relinquishes his right, to any farther obedience, than men, totally depraved, are disposed to pay him. In this scheme an atonement is made necessary, in order to finish out and render accepted the obedience of the sinner.

This scheme, as altered to accommodate it to modern taste, relinquishes the atonement, and substitutes repentance. At whatever time in this life, (and why not in the life to come?) the sinner shall be sorry that he has broken the law, and shall practise some reform, God will promptly forgive him, without any reference at all to the scenes of Calvary. He has in his heart so much compassion, and cares so little,—it amounts to this,—whether the law is respected or reprobated, that the very first tear of the offender, washes away all his sins.

These schemes are substantially the same, and are alike subversive of the law of God. They agree in casting off this poor world from all allegiance to its Maker, and virtually render him a God, not worthy either of the fear of devils, or the esteem and confidence of angels.

I have thus stated the error, and have meant to do it candidly, which seems to me to pour its contaminating influence, through all the false systems of theology, which are at present employed to injure the church of Christ, and destroy the souls of men. I proceed,

II. *To illustrate the doctrine of the text.* I shall arrange my thoughts under six general remarks; The *first* great commandment of the law, from its very nature, cannot be repealed; Nor can the *second;* The spirit of the law and the gospel is the same; The gospel is a useless device but on the supposition that the law is good, and must be supported; The gospel, that shall set aside the law, will defeat its own design; The gospel is most glorious when the law is fully sustained.

1. *The first great commandment of the law cannot be repealed.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The very nature of this law decides, that a gospel which would neutralize it, would be a curse and not a blessing. The Creator must require his creatures to consider him the object of their supreme regard; he can ask no less of devils. This precept is founded on the divine excellence, and must abide in force while God shall continue to be good. And as God is unchangeably good, this precept must abide for ever. He would sanction injustice, if he should repeal a law which requires that men render unto God the things that are God's. An act like this would create alarm in heaven, and send a premonition of ruin into every world that has continued loyal.

Moreover an act that should release intelligent creatures from loving supremely their Creator, would ruin the very beings thus released. Hence sang the Christian Poet:

> "From *thee* departing, they are lost and rove
> At random, without honour, hope, or peace."

This has ever been, and must continue to be, the law of hell, of earth, of heaven, and of all other worlds. Nothing that God has made has sufficient

greatness and grandeur, to become our supreme object of regard.

> "Give what thou canst, without *thee* we are poor;
> And *with thee* rich, take what thou wilt away."

The capacity that God has given us, must be gratified, or we are miserable; and if it be gratified, God is loved according to the commandment.

Now a gospel that should set aside a law like this, would prove a miserable expedient for a revolted world, as it would rob God of his deserved honours, and man of his highest happiness. How impossible that God should have given us such a gospel! He never has, and never will, unless he could wish to see us all miserable. To be restored, from inordinate attachment to the creature, to supreme love to God, is salvation itself; and how can this be effected by annulling the precept that enjoins this very change? And we assert,

2. *That the second great commandment of the law cannot be repealed.* "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself." This, like the other, carries on the very face of it, its claim to perpetuity. The first commandment was intended to bind the creation to its Maker, the second to bind creatures to each other. Neither of these ligatures can be sundered, and creatures be happy. To love our fellow men, is to make them subservient to our enjoyment: for to love is usually a delightful exercise. If God had commanded us to hate our neighbour, he had subjected us to the necessity of disobeying him, or of being lastingly unhappy. In proof of this position I have only to refer you to facts. Ask the man of passion, who daily goes home enraged at some one of his fellow men, there to study revenge, whether *to hate* makes him happy. Or let my readers call to mind some of those seasons, when they were

enlisted in some obstinate quarrel, and when for whole days, and perhaps for weeks, passion rested in their bosom, and tell me if you were not unhappy? Then in commanding men to love one another, God has simply forbidden them to be *un*happy; has given them leave to be happy.

And the *measure* of our love, as here given, what could be more equitable. My neighbour is a sensitive being like myself; is capable of equal happiness; and that happiness worth as much to him, as mine to me. Hence God must value his blessedness, as much as mine: and it is my duty to feel as God does. Hence, if God should repeal this law, it would be consenting that men should do wrong, have feelings at variance with his, and love happiness simply because it is theirs.

To repeal this law would be to license selfishness; the very passion which has filled this unhappy world, and kept it full, of misery. If men are not obligated to love each other *as themselves*, then is there no standard by which their affection can be measured, and they are at liberty to hate and devour one another. If the gospel has set aside this law, then all the outrages which men have committed, one upon another, have been licensed depredations: for God has disapproved only of what was a violation of his law. If he has annulled the precept that required men to love, he has virtually given them liberty to hate, and has sanctioned a total disregard of the second great commandment of the law. But nothing like this is true. The law still makes on fallen creatures a demand as large as upon the first pair in their innocence, and continiues to press its obligations after they are lost. The miseries of hell would be mitigated, if this law could cease to be binding. The lost might then hate and torment each other, without increasing their guilt.

3. *The spirit of the law and the gospel is the same.* The spirit of the law, as we have seen, is love; and the same is true of the gospel. In the inventory given us of the fruits of the Spirit, the first named is love. This is the bond of union in heaven, and all who are verging toward heaven, cultivate love, as the fundamental principle of their piety. When we read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," we have in other language, the whole spirit of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And when we read, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:" do we not also read, "For this is the law and the prophets." Here the Lord Jesus Christ himself identifies the two, as if to settle the point forever, that he came to expound and enforce the very precepts of the law of Sinai. And the man must be grossly ignorant of the New Testament, who does not recognize it, as the very law of the ten commandments, broken down to the relationships, and the exigencies of human life. In both Testaments we have the same divine character, the same code of doctrines, the same Christian graces, the same social duties, and the same pure and holy religion.

When the gospel offers a pardon, to those who have violated the law, care is taken that the law be fulfilled and honoured. The law is not censured, nor the sinner violently wrested from its curse. A substitute is furnished, on which the curse may light; a substitute who had himself perfectly obeyed the law, who loved it, held it in high and holy respect, and died because he would not see it dishonoured. Had it been a bad law, hastily conceived, and imprudently promulgated, Christ would not have borne its curse. If too severe, he would have recalled its edicts, and would have mitigated its sanctions,

if cruel. It was his *first* concern to secure the honours of the Godhead, and to do this he must sustain the law; his *second* to redeem the wretch who had broken it, and was condemned.

The Saviour had no more compassion than the Father; loved justice, truth, and holiness no less; hated sin as much, and hated the sinner as much, and was as unwilling as the Father, that a jot or a tittle of the law should fail. He did not engross in himself all the benevolence of the Godhead; and was not a partisan with the sinner against the law. He did not come to make war with the Law-giver, but with sin; not to vindicate the rights of the condemned, and wrest them from the punishment to which some ancient and cruel decree had exposed them; but to cover them with his body and his life, from the miseries they deserved to endure. Thus the law and the gospel have both the same spirit, and press the same design; to honour God, and make his creatures happy.

4. *The gospel was a useless device, but on the supposition that the law is good, and must be supported.* Nothing can be more absurd than a gospel designed to free men from the curse of the law, while that law is already repealed, and has ceased to be binding. Hence the Lord Jesus Christ, lest men should make a mistake on this subject, declared very early in his ministry, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Indeed the very hypothesis on which the gospel is built, is, that the law is good, its precepts right, and its penalties binding. If otherwise, the law should have been repealed *without* a Saviour. As soon as it was discovered that the law was not adapted to our circumstances, was too strict or too severe, instead of subjecting Christ to the pains of the cross, to relieve the culprit, he should have been

pardoned without an atonement. Probably those who deny an atonement, are brought to this erroneous result, by some indefinite conception, that the law is repealed, to provide the way for man's recovery.

Our reason tells us, that there should have been no substitution, for those who had broken a bad law, or a law which for any reasons whatever it was not wise to sustain. If not wise to execute it, in the last extremity, upon the offender himself, then assuredly, not merely unwise, but monstrous, to punish the substitute. There should have been proclaimed immediately a free and full pardon. There was the greatest possible cruelty in the transactions of the cross, but on the supposition that the law is too good to be set aside, even if the population of a world must perish to do it honour.

5. *A gospel that shall set aside the law will defeat its own design.* Tell the sinner, in the same message in which you offer him a Saviour, that the law he has broken, is repealed; or has come into disrepute, and its curse less to be feared than formerly, and he will answer, Then I have no need of a Saviour. If my Sovereign is convinced, as I long have been, that the law is too rigid, he will not punish its violations; if its penalties are unjust, he will not execute them. I reject your offered Redeemer, and approach boldly to the throne, to demand my acquittal. It is mocking me, to talk of an atonement, while I have done only right, in opposing a cruel and oppressive legislation.

Thus the advocates of a gospel, built on the ruins of the law, soon as they make the secret known, that the law has perished, furnish the sinner a motive for rejecting the gospel they offer. Thus they labour in vain and spend their strength for nought. They may urge the overtures of their gospel, till they have become gray

in the service, and their hearers will remain unchanged and unreformed. The only consistent course is, to justify wholly the law, or offer no Redeemer. We must make man the diseased, and suffering, and dying creature. that the Book of God describes him to be, or we need offer him no physician; must make him blind, or offer him no eye-salve; make him guilty and condemned, or offer him no pardon; make him polluted, or offer him no cleansing; make him an exile, a captive, and a slave, or offer him no redemption. The estimation in which we hold the *law*, will decide, whether we have any success in offering sinners the *gospel*.

6. *The gospel is most glorious when the law is fully sustained.* The glory and the grace of the gospel, must, in the very nature of the case, be exactly commensurate. to the claims and the curses of the law. The one must contain a wo as broad as the blessedness implied in the other; must present a ruin as wide and desperate, as the cure presented in the other; must frown as implacably, as the other smiles complacently. When we can thus honour the law, and justify the Law-giver, and defend, without misgiving, the most punctilious execution of every threatening that has issued from the lips of the Eternal; then it is that we can equally elevate the glorious gospel of the blessed God: which else becomes as worthless as the Shaster or the Koran. The deeper and the darker the pit into which I had sunk, the mightier that arm that could lift me out. The full glories of Calvary, have never been seen, but by the same eye, that has descried ineffable beauty in the divine legislation. The gospel will be shorn of its last beam, when it shall be made to eclipse the splendour of the law. It is only the dead in sin that need the offer of life, the condemned that need a pardon. Christ is the Repairer

of the breach; make the breach wide, and you make the Repairer illustrious. Carry not the fertilizing influence of the gospel, but into the very territory; where the curse of a good law violated has spread a boundless desolation. There its healing waters will be welcome, an Eden will blossom under your feet, and the harvest of many years, repay your toil and make glad your heart. May the blessed God put honour upon his own institutions.

In bringing my remarks to a close, let me say, that the law *cannot* go into disuse. It expresses exactly the mind of God, and must be the rule of duty to his obedient subjects forever. And when broken, as it has been in this unhappy world, its curse must fall, and remain upon the head of the transgressor, till he flies for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel. Till then he lies condemned, just as if a Saviour had not died; with this difference, that his condemnation if he perish will be aggravated by his having been offered redemption, He might have had life but would not, unless on such condition, that his transgressions might be justified. I close with

REMARKS.

1. How tremendous the ruin of sinners, who after all this, shall fall under the condemning sentence of the divine law. God we see will not set his law aside. He would give his own well-beloved Son, to expire on the ragged nails, to save those who had broken the law, and incurred its penalty, rather than give his foes occasion to say, that he had repealed it. "If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If God appeared so inflexibly holy, on Calvary, where he drew his sword upon the sinner's substitute, how terrible the indignation that he will display in hell. O, is there a man, so hardened and so daring, that he would venture

to pass through life, and go on to the judgment, with the curse of the violatedlaw resting on him! When he shall see that Redeemer, who saved others, but in whose blood he would not take sanctuary, coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, will be not regret, that he had not been interested in his atonement? And when his destiny shall issue from that Saviour's lips, and he goes to make his bed in hell, will he not learn, what now he is so unwilling to know, that "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good?"

The torments of the lost, will be an abiding testimony of God's regard to his law. And those who shall have escaped to heaven, when they shall "look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed," will be feeling more and more strongly forever, how great are their obligations to the Saviour, for redeeming them from the curse of a law, so fearfully holy. And who, that places any value upon his soul, and believes that God will thus jealously guard the honour of his law, and has not already made him incorrigibly angry, will delay an hour in securing an interest in that Saviour, who bore the curse for us. O, my friend, haste your escape, as you would at midnight from your burning house, as you would from the jaws of a ravening lion, as you would from the terrors of a volcanic eruption, as you would from the fire that can never be quenched, and the worm that shall not die.

2. The subject will, I hope, prepare us to contemplate with horror, the condition of those congregations, who have selected for themselves a ministry, that builds its instructions on the ruins of the divine law. Would to God that I were mistaken, in supposing such a case to exist. But when I hear, from lips that profess to have been touched with a coal from off the altar, that man is

quite an upright being, has committed a few errors only, and these all venial, not sufficient to condemn him; that he needs no atonement, nor Saviour but to teach him, and be his pattern, and this Saviour *not* divine:—When I hear of sentiments like these from the pulpit, I fear there is a controversy with the law of God, and that it is meant to be understood, that he has relinquished his demand upon the sinner, of a stricter obedience, than he is disposed to yield.

Thus by putting aside the law, as we suppose is done in the outset, and hewing down the whole system to accommodate it to this fatal error, the whole, though somewhat consistent with itself, is rotten and deceptive. Thus the sinner is lulled, and soothed, and when asleep, is kept slumbering till he is lost. He never has any proper sense of his sins, nor respect for the violated law, nor regard for the holiness, and justice, and truth of God. He never becomes humble, nor fears God, nor embraces the Saviour, nor quits his sins. The gospel he hears is like the Siren's song, that lures but to destroy. It keeps men stupid till it is too late to be anxious to any profit.

O, ye lost and ruined congregations! if my voice might reach you, I would tell you to look well to the ministry you attend. While it pretends to offer you life, it may destroy you. If you find it aiming to lessen the number, and diminish the aggravations of your sins, you ought to suspect it. You never will betake yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, as your precious and only Saviour, till the commandment come home to your bosom, high and imperious in its claims; holy, and just, and good, in all it requires, and in all it threatens. In the sense of the apostle, sin must revive and we die, else there can be no hope that we shall be made alive in Christ Jesus. The multitudes who have gone to heaven, and the whole

army of believers who are bound thither, know the period when they felt themselves justly exposed to eternal death. The gospel that pretends to find you quite whole and happy, needing only a little instruction, and perhaps some reformation, and aims not to alarm and distress you, you may rest assured is a lie, and not the truth; it comes from hell, and not from heaven; and if embraced, will conduct you back with it to the recesses of perdition

SERMON XLVIII.

IMPENITENT MEN DESTITUTE OF HOLINESS.

Romans iii. 18.

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

THE text gives us man's native character. Such he is till the Spirit of God has sanctified him. The criticism that would apply this whole passage to the people only who lived before the flood, or to a very few of the baser sort of sinners, is a contrivance of infidelity, and is extensively employed, in the present day, to betray and ruin souls. The man who is willing to shape his creed by the divine record, is entirely satisfied, when he reads the passages in the Old Testament which are here quoted; but when he finds them referred to by an inspired apostle, and by him applied to the whole human family, Jews and Gentiles, no shadow of doubt remains. He is now content to lie down under the humiliating charge they bring, and is ashamed and confounded before the great Searcher of hearts. He who has become a new creature will consent that "God be true, though every man a liar."

The fear of the Lord is a gracious affection, belonging not to the slave but to the son, and is the genuine fruit of a new heart, the beginning of wisdom. Hence where *this* affection is not, there are no *gracious* affections. And if this be true, and the text applies to all men in

their unsanctified state, then it plainly teaches us, that *In unregenerate men there is no moral excellence.*

My object at this time will be, not so much to prove the doctrine, as to account for its having been controverted, and offer some reasons for esteeming it a highly important doctrine.

I. Many have mistaken the native character of man, from *having seen him capable of affections and deeds that are praiseworthy.* It is not man's prerogative to judge the heart; hence, if the tendency of an action is to that which is good, it is imputed to the very motive that ought to have produced it. If the deed has a fair *exterior*, it is considered ungenerous not to impute it to correct principle. Men judge, however, on the maxim, that what is highly esteemed among men, cannot be abomination in the sight of God. Hence they dress up human nature in garbs of innocence; and conceive it impossible that there should be, under so much that is fair and good in conduct, an evil heart of unbelief.

They find men capable of kind, and generous, and honourable sentiments. They can be *true*, and *trusty*, and *faithful*, and *affectionate;* and they triumphantly ask, How can all this be when there is no love of God in the heart! They see discharged, and sometimes quite honourably, the offices of parent, husband, brother and child, and all the other domestic and social relations, and impute it all, though to be accounted for on other principles, to native moral excellence. Hence they are precipitated into a controversy with that plain and humbling testimony of heaven, that "The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be."

Why will not men believe, what the scriptures so plainly teach, that the heart is deceitful above all things

and desperately wicked; and from this truth infer, that very different motives may lead to the same deeds. We often see that an amiable disposition, a tameness and mildness, such as distinguish the lamb from the wolf, and the vulture from the dove; and that results in the exercise of many an amiable affection, and the doing of many a kind action; may consist with the practice of sin, the habit of a daily violation of the divine law, a prompt rejection of all the overtures of the gospel, and an inveterate disgust for the duties of a cordial and secret piety. We have recognized, where there was all the instinctive amiableness that is ever claimed, the existence of a polished and fashionable infidelity; have marked offence taken, at the distinguishing doctrines of revelation, at the scruples of a well disciplined conscience, at the frequency and fervency of devotional exercises, and the elevated views and affections of the revived and happy believers. Still there were high pretensions to kindness, rectitude, generosity, and *even piety*. There was not a consciousness of the deep-rooted enmity of the heart to whatever is holy and heavenly. Men have wept under the sound of the gospel, and seemed the veriest converts to the truths under discussion, the affections enforced, and the duties urged, and ere they have passed the threshold of the sanctuary, have vented their spleen against the man, who reached their sensibilities, and drew from them, in an unguarded hour, their reluctant testimony to the gospel he announced.

We do not deny, that there has been seen in men, not sanctified, much that it would be disgraceful not to admire, and *envious* not to *praise*, and evil not to *imitate;* and still we may have had indubitable evidence, that in the very same bosom there beat a heart hostile to God, and holiness, and heaven. Not certainly will God, who

compares the temper of the heart with his law, approve always the very deeds that men have praised, or the men who may have stood immeasurably high in human estimation.

On this point the truth must not be concealed. We cannot say to sinners, that if they please *man*, *God* will assuredly be pleased; that if they speak kindly to man, and do deeds of mercy to him, the Eternal will say, "Ye have done it unto me." There is no such assurance given in the record. And the time, or rather the *eternity*, will be here so soon, when their whole character must be known, when they must stand before the omniscient God, and all their heart be opened, and their whole life be read; that to deceive them, and cry peace, peace, when there is no peace, would be as cruel as death.

There is neither the *necessity* nor the *wish* to deny, that unsanctified men have exhibited many natural excellencies of character. On this point I know not that there will be at last any controversy between *God* and them. Our Saviour looked at the young man in the gospel, and loved him, while yet he was unquestionably in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity. We yield to men traits of character that are amiable, and useful, and endearing, and wish most sincerely that there need be no reserve in our praise. But while they have been kind, and neighbourly, and pitiful, and even generous to their fellows, they have robbed God. They have wept at the tale of distress and hastened to succour the perishing, and bled in sympathy over the diseased and the dying, but have never shed a tear at the cross. They have believed man, and confided in him, and spoken truth to him, and have well earned his confidence and affection, but they have practically made God a liar. They have never fully credited either his threatenings or

his promises, nor thought it necessary to take sanctuary in his Son. There has not been a moment in their whole life, take the time when their conscience was the most tender, and their sensibilities the most awakened, and their deportment the most religious, and their hopes of heaven the most profound; when some other object beside God, had not the high and distinct ascendancy in their affections. While they could treat men mildly, and be rebuked without wrath, and even endure divine judgments without the appearance of rebellion; they could still brow-beat all the anathemas of the law, and parry every thrust of the gospel, and live on, without reflection, and without prayer, and without repentance, and without God in the world. They still cared not for all the melting entreaties of divine mercy. God was not in all their thoughts, nor his religion in their lips, nor his throne in their hearts, nor his will controlled them; while as the friends of the poor, the patrons of moral virtue, and the benefactors of the world, they were illustrious, and were promised in human eulogy a luminous and happy immortality.

Thus has the human character, all deformity as God views it, been exhibited as sound and good. Distinctions have not always been made, between what is *nature*, and what is *grace;* what is mere *instinct*, and what is *holiness*. The multitudes of the ungodly have been blessed and dismissed, doubting whether their character was at all deficient, or they needed to be born again; and high in the hope that a slight reform, and a little care, would soon prepare them to stand accepted of God. Even men who have worn noted marks of the apostacy, the covetous, the proud, the vain, and the worldly, have retired with a smile, to enjoy their good opinion of themselves and feed quietly, and sleep

sweetly, while the wrath of God abode upon them. They have gone to their farms and their merchandise, to love and pursue supremely the cares of the life that now is, or bury themselves in scenes of dissipation and folly, not suspecting but that all was well, and all safe, till either the Spirit of God awakened them, or they sunk to a hopeless perdition: or they live still, and are filling up the measure of their iniquity, and are preparing for a deeper despair, than if they had perished far sooner. And they must thus perish, it seems, because they are amiable, while publicans and harlots, who have no such virtues to screen them from conviction, believe in the Saviour, and live forever!

II. Men have been led to controvert this doctrine *because they are not conscious of the wrong motives by which they are actuated.* Through the workings of a deceitful heart, ignorance of the scriptures, and sometimes by the aid of a heterodox ministry, men have totally mistaken their whole moral character. They are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. What the prophet says of the idol-maker, is more or less true of all unregenerate men in all ages, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Hazael could not believe that he deserved the character which the prophet gave him, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" And Jehu, when he cut off the house of Ahab, and destroyed the worshippers of Baal, would have felt himself abused, to be told that he was actuated by the love of praise. When the rulers of the Jews were charged with murdering the Lord of life and glory, though they had done this very deed,

thought Peter a slanderer, in his attempt to bring this blood upon them. So Saul of Tarsus supposed he was doing God service, while persecuting to death the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Thus may men act from the very worst of motives, and yet suppose them the very best. They do not consider it important to know what their designs are, and have not that familiarity with their hearts that would render it easy to discover. And thus they are led to controvert the truth, and quarrel with God, his word, and his ministers, who all give them the very character they have.

III. The doctrine of the text is often converted *to support schemes with which this sentiment would not compare.* The sinner's entire depravity, is a fundamental doctrine, on which there can be built only one, and that the gospel system. Make this doctrine true, and it sweeps away, as with the besom of destruction, every creed but one from the face of the world. It settles the question, that God may righteously execute his law upon all unregenerate men; that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" that the doings of unregenerate men are unholy; that even repentance will not take away the curse that has lit, and must rest, upon the man who has not continued in all the things written in the book of the law to do them; that an atonement, such as God has provided, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, is the only medium through which we can purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. It further decides the question, that men will not seek after God; that he must be found of them that sought him not, must give repentance unto life, must take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh; that in the regenerate he must work, to will and to do of his own good pleasure; and

finally, that *he* must be an Almighty Saviour, who could redeem beings so lost, and put them back again into the favour of a justly offended God.

Thus it is only one scheme of truths that this doctrine will support; the faith once delivered to the saints. If men depart from the truth, as we are told they shall in these last days, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, they must thus come into close and comfortless contact with a doctrine, which, if true, gives the lie to all their false and delusive schemes. Hence we wonder not that "the foe of God and man, issuing from his dark den," has here displayed, in every age of Zion's conflict, his mightiest chieftainship. Here must be the edge of battle, in every conflict between the gospel, and the systems invented by men; between the friends and the foes of truth. This is the fortress that has been taken and retaken ten thousand times, where has been tried the prowess of God's people, and his enemies; where has been displayed the power of God, and been put to the test the endurance of his elect, in all the ages that have gone by.

IV. This doctrine has been controverted *through the pride of the human heart.* Depravity is a most degrading doctrine, and *entire depravity* intolerable, till the heart has been humbled by the grace of God. There is in apostate men great pride of character. We would all be considered friendly to what is good and great, and such is God, even in the profession of the most depraved; such is his law, and such is his government. With the promptness, with which we fly the touch of fire, does pride resist imputation. Hence inquires the unregenerate man, Would you deny me the credit of loving my Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor? Do I never obey his law, or do a deed from

motives that please him? And is there, among my noblest actions of kindness to men, nothing that amounts to love? In my gladness for the good things that God bestows, is there not a shred of gratitude? in my admiration of his perfections and his works, no love? in my belief of his word, no faith? in my expectation of heaven, no hope? in my sorrow for sin, no repentance? in my endurance of adverse events, no submission? and in my gentleness and condescension, no humility? are my prayers sin, and my sacrifices abomination? do I thus, on all occasions, break the *first* and *great* commandment of the law? and on all occasions the *second* also? in all my noble generosity, is there no benevolence? in my soft deportment, no meekness? and in my tears for the miserable, no pious sympathy? must *every* deed I do have the same moral deformity? and God hate me, and his law condemn me, when I follow the kindest dictates of that nature he has given me?

Thus men feel, that if this doctrine be true, it goes to defame and ruin their character. It makes them go astray soon as they are born, speaking lies. It makes their righteousness as filthy rags. When they have washed themselves in snow-water, and made their hands never so clean, this doctrine, with ruthless hand, plunges them into the ditch, and their own clothes abhor them. When they industriously provide for their household, they are accused of loving the world, while the love of the Father is not in them. When they would go to the sanctuary, and pay their vows, there they hear from heaven, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?"

Thus, at every point, this doctrine comes to mar their reputation, and make them hypocrites, and cover

them with shame and blushing. Hence the Jehovah, who will give men this character, may reign in other hearts; and the Bible, that will teach this doctrine, may lie neglected; and the ministry that will publish it, may starve: and the cringing multitude, who will believe it, may herd together, and together sink into the contempt they covet. Thus God is treated, and thus his word, and thus his ministers, and thus his people, because they maintain a doctrine, the sinner's disgust at which, establishes beyond the possibility of doubt, or the danger of mistake. It so degrades the character of men, that they will not believe it, if they perish contradicting it.

I could offer other reasons, why this doctrine has been so frequently assailed, but shall proceed *to offer some reasons for esteeming it a very important doctrine.*

1. The fact, that *it is plainly revealed*, testifies to its importance. God would not have cumbered his word with a doctrine of no value. If we find it there who will venture to deny its importance? and if *not there*, how does it happen, that those are its warmest advocates, who are most familiar with the Bible, and most ready to regard its dictates? The context contains a very dark review of man's native character: and it would be infidelity to suppose it *too highly coloured.* "There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet *are* swift to shed blood.

Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we fearlessly assert, that this is given as the native character of Jews and Gentiles, by one whom the Holy Ghost inspired, and who could not mistake the truth. Believe the last clause only, and tell me if in men, who have "no fear of God before their eyes," there is any holiness? "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Here again Christian honesty will read the same doctrine. And the same in this text, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." And in this, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And that none may escape, it reads; "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man:" And thus the uniform testimony of Scripture. There would be no end in quoting the Scriptures on this important point, till I had referred you to almost the whole Bible. And a doctrine about which God will say so much, must be, in his estimation, and should be in ours, of high importance.

2. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, *as it is one of the first truths, used by the Spirit of God, in awakening and sanctifying sinners.* Till men see their depravity, they will not approve of the law that condemns them. They will be wondering, if, indeed, they think at all, why God threatens them, and be blaming the law as too rigid in its requirements, and cruel in its penalties. Now there is no hope of a sinner, while he stands in this posture; and nothing will move him from it, but a conviction of his lost and ruined state. Hide from him the character of his heart, and you seal him up to everlasting stupidity. You can arouse him to no apprehensions of danger, for under the government

of a good God none are in danger but *sinners*. And there will of course be no repentance. A thoughtless sinner sees nothing to repent of, nor any reason why he should repent, and the man who knows nothing of his heart will not be thoughtful. The commandment never comes home to his conscience. If he has hopes of heaven, it will be on the ground of his own self-righteousness. Thus the Saviour will be to him as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, and the work of grace can never be begun. Thus is the sinner, who is kept ignorant of his heart, sealed up to the judgment, and goes on as the ox to the slaughter, and the fool to the correction of the stocks. The Spirit of God will sanctify only through the truth, and the entire depravity of the heart is a first truth, without a knowledge of which no sinner was ever yet fitted for the kingdom of God.

A gospel, then, if we must so call it, that hides from men the deformity of their moral character, betrays and ruins them. It says to the wicked, that it shall be well with them, and thus cradles their fears to sleep, till their period of mercy is past; and proves, ultimately, the greatest calamity that can befall them. It closes upon them the portals of eternal life, and keeps them dreaming, and fearless, till they open their eyes in hell. But when they at last make the discovery, perhaps on the bed of death, or it may be not till life has gone out, how will they execrate the recollection of such a gospel. It will come up to mind as does the tempest, that wrecked all their hopes upon the relentless reef; or the fire that forced them to make a midnight retreat from the place that had been long their safe and happy home.

The ministers of Christ would love to preach a smoother gospel, if men could only be safe under it. It

would be pleasant to have to do only with the *invitations*, and the *promises*, and the *hopes* of the gospel. They had far rather remind the believer of the joys to come, than to admonish the unbeliever of the judgment, the outer darkness, and the gnawing worm. They could have far more pleasure in describing the graces of the Spirit, than in portraying the deformities of the unsanctified heart.

But the grand object of the gospel ministry is to save souls, and this object is not gained, unless men are taught, as the very first lesson of that ministry, that they are lost. Hence to suppress this truth, would be to neutralize at once the whole effect of this ministry. Whatever we may wish, we can be the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ to a ruined world, but on this one condition, that the alienation of our world from God, hold the place of a *first truth* in every effort of our ministry. The gospel has absolutely *no meaning*, and can be of *no use*, but to the *lost* and the *condemned*.

3. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, *as it lies at the foundation of the whole gospel scheme.* The Lord Jesus Christ came into our world, to seek and to save them that are *lost*, and the whole plan of salvation is so interwoven with this fact, as to be unintelligible without it. What means the covenant of redemption, but in connexion with the fact that we are captives and slaves, and need to be redeemed? what is there intelligible in the atonement, but that we owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay? why urged to repent, but that we are in love with sin, and must otherwise perish? why believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but that we need a better righteousness than our own to shelter us from the wrath to come? why make to ourselves a new

heart, but that we have by nature evil hearts of unbelief, inclining us to depart from the living God?

And let me ask, why all the threatenings of the gospel, but that it was written for the use of a disobedient and gainsaying people? why on every page does there meet us some anathema, but that it was intended for those who love not our Lord Jesus Christ? why has death passed upon all men, but that all have sinned? why a judgment and a place of torment, but that those who have carried their entire depravity with them into the coming world, may be distinguished, and may go to their own place.

Finally, it is matter of doubt whether an honest man, acquainted with the Bible, and willing to collect his creed from it, will find it possible to exclude the doctrine of the text from a fundamental place in its structure. What doctrine can he preach, if he denies it? what precept enforce? what threatening announce? what promise apply? We need no gospel if this doctrine is not true, and we *have none*. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Will the great God defend his own truth, and bless every effort for its vindication, and sanctify his people through its influence, and speedily let it cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Will he bring the multitudes of the ungodly to know, that they are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, and persuade them to fly for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.

SERMON XLIX.

ONLY ONE TRUE GOD.

John xvii. 3.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God.

In the report of that gospel, that shall deal honestly with dying men, it is of the first importance, that there be exhibited the true character of God. As men are to be sanctified through the truth, it will be confessed, that no truth can be of higher importance, than that which relates to the being and attributes of Jehovah. Unless on this point there is made a full and clear exposure of the truth, our religion may be so defective, as to neither profit us in this life, nor save us in the life to come. Under the very names that belong to the true God, we may worship an idol, and thus give our depravity the shape of the grossest insult.

We have sometimes listened to a loud and earnest address on the subject of religion, and it professed itself the gospel, in which the character of the true God was industriously concealed. Men may speak of God, and with much engagedness; his adorable names may swell every clause, and round every period, and the whole be uttered with a decent and well-bred softness; and one may suppose himself religiously employed, in hearing the true gospel, and be charmed with the changes rung upon the names he has been accustomed to adore; and

still the god proclaimed may not be the blessed Jehovah. There may be a view exhibited that does not belong to the Creator, but to some imaginary god created for the occasion.

The text would furnish *several* topics of remark, but I intend to confine myself to *one, To expose some of the false views of God, which are not unfrequently presented us under the appellation of the gospel;* and thus illustrate the character of that *only true God* whom to know is eternal life.

I. There is sometimes an extolling of all the more *clement* attributes of God, as some have presumptuously distinguished, while the *severer* attributes are unnoticed. The design of these declaimers seems to be, that our attention be fixed exclusively upon what, in their estimation, is *soft* and *mild* and *lovely* in God, while his *holiness*, his *justice* and his *truth*;—all in him that can go to make a sinner afraid, or beget conviction and repentance, is industriously concealed. God's compassion for our lost and miserable world, his patience, his endurance, his long-suffering, his promptness to pardon, and total aversion to destroy;—all those features of the divine mind, that can soothe alarm, are early and industriously developed, as if embracing the whole of God that he himself loves, or man is required to worship and adore; while the other parts of the divine image are obscured, as one would hide the scars and excrescences that have fortuitously covered more than half his visage. Thus the great luminary of the moral world must be cast into a deep and dark eclipse, that the naked eye of sense may gaze upon his few remaining glories. It is feared, we presume, that were the whole character of God exhibited, sinners would be filled with disgust, and be driven from the bosom of their Sovereign. He must not adhere to

the principles of that law he has promulgated, nor care to vindicate himself from the aspersions that sinners have cast upon his character and his government. He must not resolve that mercy and truth meet together ; and that righteousness and peace kiss each other. He must cast a smile upon the prodigal, ere he shall turn his face or his feet toward his father's house. Thus must the holy and righteous God, before whom devils tremble, melt down into the weak and pitiful parent, or not one of his apostate family shall come back to his bosom and his service. So men would judge.

But God seems to have had other views, and has revealed his whole character, fearless of the predicted consequences. If there was any danger from a full exposure of his character, why did he not hold himself concealed, or throw into the shade, as men would do for him, those parts of his character that must give offence. If that be good policy which I am venturing to expose, God could have directed that neither the works of creation, nor the Bible, should have told us the whole truth respecting himself. He might have suppressed the history of that revolt in heaven, and its results, and told us nothing of hell and the judgment, nor named in his Book those attributes that throw around him such an atmosphere of darkness and terror. He need not have given us, if he had so pleased, the stories of the deluge, and of Sodom, and of Korah and his company. But God has exposed the whole truth, and that in the very Book which he has directed should be our daily companion.

If the scheme I oppose be true, I know not how to account for such a Bible as God has put into our hands, just calculated to betray a secret that should not have been divulged for worlds. If there belong to God any

attributes that were not intended to be made known to sinners till they are reconciled to him; if they cannot safely be told that he is angry with the wicked every day, has appointed a time and place of judgment, and prepared a deep and dark perdition for the condemned; if they are to be urged to come to him, expecting to find him all mercy; then by what alarming oversight have we resolved to put the Bible into the hands of sinners? Must the parental character of God so dazzle and fill the eye, as to eclipse the Sovereign, and the Judge, the Abettor of truth, and the Avenger of wrong and of outrage? And must we never know the whole character of God, till we have to deal with him in the judgment? Can we be sure that the prodigal, after he has been thus decoyed home to his father's house, will be pleased with his father? Had he not better know, while away in his land of exile, exactly the father he must meet, and the father he must love, and stay there till this character is approved?

I know not where in the whole Bible we are authorised, to elevate one attribute of God above another, and term the one *mild* and the other *severe*. I know not where men have learned, that there are principles in the divine nature and government, that to be fully known would subvert the benevolent design of the gospel. If God has thus instructed any of his ministers, and they act by his authority in deciding what *may* and what *may not* be developed to the world of the ungodly, I have only to say, "To their own master they stand or fall"

II. There is perhaps some occasion to fear, that some have gone into the opposite extreme, and have presented exclusively the more *forbidding* attributes of God, while his *grace* and *mercy* have been in this case too much concealed. When Jehovah is exhibited as constituted of

entire sovereignty; as doing his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, without the least regard to the happiness and the salvation of his creatures; as casting after the wayward and the lost, no look of compassionate tenderness;—can this be a faithful exhibition of the character of God? Should it be said, That God is willing to show his wrath, and that he has created intelligent beings on purpose that they might be the vessels of his wrath; and has communicated positive hardness to their hearts, because they did not render themselves depraved enough for his purpose; and pushed them on to a character, that would be sufficiently desperate for some deed of darkness, which he had resolved they should perpetrate;—would one gather from all this the true character of God? I know that I have now presented an extreme case, and sincerely hope that not often, perhaps never, is sovereignty presented quite so bare and forbidding, and the truth pushed to an extremity so cold and cheerless. The objection to such presentations is, that they do not exhibit the whole character of God. He is willing to show his wrath, only where his mercy in Jesus Christ has been long and obstinately rejected. He created intelligent beings for his own glory, and will honour himself in their perdition, if by rejecting the Saviour, they count themselves unworthy of eternal life. He has hardened their hearts by the very dispensations that should have won them to duty and to God; has sent them strong delusions that they might believe a lie and be damned, when they did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. We must pour into these strong exhibitions of truth, in order to render them the gospel, and make them useful, the *whole* character of God.

How can you hope to persuade rebels to submit them-

selves to this bare and appalling sovereignty? Why must they become reconciled to their Creator, before they may even know, that he is a God of mercy, or has it in his heart to bestow pardons? An apostle has said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I am not without my fears, that on this side of the line of orthodoxy there has sometimes been presented a character of God, as imperfect, not to say as unsafe, as when only his *clemency* is seen. And who can say that God would not be as unwilling, that one set of his attributes should be exclusively presented, as another? Under neither have we a full and honest portrait of the only true God, whom to know is eternal life. While the one error will lead unregenerate men to presume, that they love their Maker, so under the other it is feared, that many true believers may be kept all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of perdition. The one will make a multitude of happy hypocrites, while the other will conduct to heaven whole churches of trembling, doubting believers. The one will widen the fold, till the sheep and the goats can herd together; the other will contract it till many of the lambs must lie without, and be exposed to storms and beasts of prey; and finally neither presents correctly the character of God.

III. We have sometimes presented us a picture of *warring* attributes. Mercy triumphs over justice, and grace is made victorious over truth and righteousness. Under this system, God disapproves the properties of his own nature, and the principles of his own government; and contrives to defeat and nullify his own decrees. He issued his law, and pronounced it good, and made in it no provision for pardon; none he could make; and when the sinner broke that law, he passed sentence, and threat-

ened its execution. But he is now made to repent of the sternness, and integrity, and purity, that dictated that law, and uttered that sentence, and threatened its execution: and is *re*resolved, that, come what will of reproach upon his name, and injury to his government and kingdom, the sinner shall not suffer. He built a place of torment, and separated it from heaven by a bottomless gulf, and made it a dark, and dreary, and desolate abode; but he has since had better and milder views; has decreed that ultimately the gulf shall become passable, the fires shall go out, and the worm shall die.

And all this is contrived to save the divine honour. To let God be what he is, and do what he has said, and carry into execution his own purpose, would, it is believed, so hurt his reputation with the population of the apostacy that any thing, that can be, must be done to save it. There must rather be suspicion cast over the whole record that would exhibit God as so inflexibly holy, and reproach poured in upon the bigotted multitude that would so rigidly explain the word. The Book of God, plain as it is, may rather mean nothing, and John record falsely, and Paul reason inconclusively, than to blot so foully and fatally the divine reputation.

To complete the picture, the Son of God is despatched from heaven to take the part of sinners, and shield them from the sword of a devouring justice. He saw, it seems, that the execution of the law would ruin the credit of the court of heaven which gave sentence, and hasted down to counteract the decree. What was stern, and unbending, and cruel in the Father, has been softened down in the Son. He covers the rebel with his hand, smiles on him, wipes away his tears, and prays him to forgive a father's unjust severity. His errand was to stay the rod of justice. He makes no atonement, none is necessary,

asks no change of heart in the culprit, but a mere reform, as the condition of pardon and life.

Thus has the character of God been so exhibited, as to involve heaven in a quarrel, and place the persons of the Godhead at issue, on the question, whether the honours of the broken law deserve to be repaired, or its Author shall sink into universal disrespect? What in the mean time shall happen to the divine government in heaven, and in all the worlds that have continued loyal, and have had hitherto the utmost confidence in the unchangeably wise and holy God? O, I feel that the ground on which I stand is holy! Will God forgive me, if in attempting to vindicate his honour, I have drawn near to him without being duly sanctified.

I know that men who have resolved to go on in sin, who have long been offended at the purity and extent of the law, and would not care if all the rights of the Godhead were trampled upon, find it very convenient to have the character of God thus brought down to their taste and their temper. They will support and will love a gospel, that will thus make God altogether such an one as themselves. Give them a gospel like this, and in half a century there will not be an avowed infidel on the whole face of the earth. Gladly would they be rid of the reproach of infidelity, could they have a gospel that would promise them a salvation equally cheap and convenient.

If God will give out his word, and then break it; will make a law, and when men have fallen under its curse, repeal it; will join the rebel in hating his own attributes; will issue an edict, and then a counter edict by which the first is neutralized; this is all exactly as they would have it. God is invested with all the human weaknesses. So Ahasuerus would make a decree, assigning to death all his Jewish subjects, and then enact another, directing

them to arm themselves for their own defence, and thus his decree comes to the ground. But how will God be affected by these inroads made upon his name and his glory? Will he suffer his character to be tampered with, and finally to be thus frittered down to the taste and the convenience of a polished, and proud, and worldly, and time-serving generation? Will it still be eternal life to know *him*, altered thus, till not an angel in heaven would know him? altered till all that devils disapproved, and that believers loved, is gone?

Let me now ask the advocates of all these schemes, what they gain? Why not be willing, that the blessed God be exhibited to the minds of men, in the very character that he gives himself. Let him be what he declared himself to be, on that occasion when it was his special object to make himself known: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty! visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generations." Here we have, (if I may still use terms which it grieves me to use,) the *milder* and the *severer* attributes of God. In this very character we must deal with him at last, the same that he was when he spoke to Moses from the cloud. Let there be a perfect balance among his attributes. Let him be neither too merciful to be just, nor too "just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" not too compassionate to be holy, nor too holy to smile again upon the rebel, who has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel; not too gracious to be true, nor so the friend of truth as not to reverse the sentence of death,

when the condemned have repented and believed. God can have no darling attribute that shall eclipse the other portions of his character; can issue no clashing edicts; and did not send his Son to soothe, and flatter, and defend the rebel, whom his justice condemned, leaving him still in all his stubbornness and his pride.

Why this zeal to create confusion in the counsels of the Godhead, and sunder the attributes that cluster in Jehovah? Simply to gratify men who cannot be pleased with God as he is. But would they be pleased with God were his character altered? They could not love an unjust God, unless indeed he would pledge himself never to treat them unjustly. And on ceasing to be a God of truth, he could not give that pledge. The sinner will reason, When God shall cease to be offended with *me* for wronging *my neighbour*, he will not be offended with *my neighbour* for injuring *me*. If *I* may hurt another, and escape with impunity, *my oppressor* escapes also. If *I* may prey upon the contents of *his purse*, and trample upon *his rights*, and sport with *his enjoyments;* then is there a world let loose, to trifle with *my interest*, and make inroads upon *my rights*, and blast *my comforts*.

Thus is there spread a ruin as wide as the whole creation of God. Angels lose their confidence in him, and all heaven is made unhappy, while the despair of the pit is changed for the hope of impunity. We assert then, that not the grossest infidelity, nor even atheism, holds out a prospect more dreary, than a gospel, that thus libels the character of Jehovah, and, by one grand mistake, sunders the whole of this alienated world forever, from the authority, and the rule, and the inspection, of an intrusive and disgustful divinity.

And when the error is on the opposite extreme, and the

mercy of God is obscured, though a different motive may have led to this exhibition, and a different result may follow, still is that motive a mistaken one, and that result unhappy. God has not directed his ministers to keep the minds of his people filled with one or two selected attributes of his nature, but would have his whole character developed. Some may be deterred from embracing religion, from the impression that they must love a God whose character is cold, calculating, severe, and vindictive. And if sanctified under such a gospel, it is doubtful whether their religion will not be either gloomy and desponding, or coldly doctrinal and polemic.

The character of God will not be found at last to have shaped itself to our mistaken views of him; but will be, when we come to deal with him in the judgment, what it always was. The attributes and the glories that may now be obscured, eclipsed or neutralized, will all be there to cluster and harmonize in the burning glories of the Godhead, on the day of retribution. A God will then meet us as holy, and just, and true, as the law, and the lightnings of Sinai would make him; and still as merciful, and gracious, and long-suffering, as Pisgah, and Tabor, and Calvary have declared him. He will confess himself in that day the Author of all the anathemas and all the promises of inspiration. Time will not have altered his character, nor the exigencies of betrayed and ruined souls moved him from a single purpose. There will gather in his brow all the majesty that makes devils afraid, and all the sweetness that makes angels glad; the one will look the lost into despair, and the combined glories of the whole look the saved into ecstasy. Then will be felt the full import of the text; the only true God will be known, and to know him will be eternal life.

REMARKS.

I have three reasons to offer for thinking this subject of great importance.

1. *Men will have a moral character according with their views of God.* As the truth sanctifies, just so surely does error contaminate, and no truths or errors so assuredly as those that relate to God. They invariably pour their influence through our whole creed, and touch every spring of action. Hence, if men think rightly of God, I cannot but hope that the truth will one day sanctify them; but if otherwise I have fearful apprehensions of their ruin. The basest of men act from principle, though from bad principle. They are profane, and false, and lewd, and dishonest, because some false views of God have begotten in them the hope of impunity. From a loose ministry, or vicious parentage, or vile associate, they have imbibed the principles that go to mould their deeds and their habits into the image of death. You may pass down, if you please, through all the ranks of immorality, from the young man in the gospel, who loved the world more than Christ, to the abandoned outlaw, and you will find as many different shades in their faith, as in the turpitude of their deeds. And every unregenerate man stands prepared to have his faith corrupted. He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. He is on the watch to hear something said of God, that may assist him in loosening the bonds of moral obligation. Hence many a youth has issued from the house of prayer, modest, civil, and decent, fearing an oath, respecting the Sabbath, doing homage to religion, and giving high promise of future worth and usefulness; but some wretch corrupted his views of God, and immediately he cast off

restraint, and went out to scatter through society firebrands, arrows and death. Hence, if we regard the eternal life of our children, and the youth in our streets, we shall furnish them a gospel, and a library, and give them that instruction which will lead them to a correct knowledge of God.

2. *Believers will have a religious character according with their views of God.* Nothing has been more obvious in the history of man, than the conformity of his religious character to that of the God he believed in and worshipped. Pass through the territories of paganism, and, such as you find their gods, such are their worshippers. Are they fierce, and jealous, and lewd, and bloody, or mild and placable, such invariably are their devotees. And as you come up through the lower grades of nominal Christians, ask them their views of God, and their answer will give you substantially the purity of their religious character. God is our highest object of respect and of imitation, and to be like him, the highest object of holy aspiration. Hence, if in our esteem, his character is more or less pure and lovely, such we shall wish our own to be. He who sees in God no attribute but mercy, and never thinks of him but as a *father*, will be less likely to hate sin, and less careful to be holy, than the man who thinks of God as a *sovereign*, and a *judge*, as well as a *father*.

And the case will be similar as to *enjoyment*. No false views of God will render us as happy as correct views. If we see only the mild and merciful traits of the divine character, we may have joy, but it will not be solid and lasting. And if we look at God merely in the attitude of sovereignty, and may never call him our Father, or see his mercy commingled with his terrors, we shall be forever in bondage. There are no doubt

many on their way to heaven, who are so injured by their creed, as seldom to pray any other but the prayer of the condemned and the lost. They are serious and watchful Christians, but never hopeful, and never happy: joint heirs with Christ, yet never venturing to say, Abba Father!

Nor will Christians who have partial views of God be *useful*. It is when he appears in all his glories, attracting sinners to himself by the full view of his attributes, and mingling mercy with judgment, reigns to make his creatures happy, that we feel our souls inspired to be workers together with him in extending his dominions. It is then that it seems to us a grief and a pity, that there should be any heart alienated from him, any hands that do not labour in his service, or tongue that does not speak his praise. Not the *sovereignty* of God alone, nor his *mercy* alone, can make the most useful man. The one holds back the inspiring influence of joy and hope, the other begets a religion that will all evaporate in songs and hosannas. Angels are inspired, by seeing the whole of God; and men will be more or less like angels, as "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, shall give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself." Then it is that we feel it to be a reasonable service, that we present our bodies and our souls to him, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.

3. *Society at large will shape its moral aspect from the prevailing views of God.* As fraud, and falsehood, and blood, invariably follow the track of idolatry, and the dark places of the earth are thus filled with the habitations of cruelty; so in the different parts of Christendom, you may gather the prevailing notions of God from the morals of the community. Survey the darker

territories of the Catholic communion, and tell me if in rapine and murder, their population is removed more than a single shade from the dreariness and desolations of paganism. Where in Christendom is life and property least secure; where are daily assassinations, where the whole population prepared for any deed of darkness and cruelty, but where there is least prevalent a correct knowledge of God. And let any one of the better territories of Christendom become apostate in their views of God, and how soon will vice spring up, the public morals be changed, the Sabbath be lost, the theatre thronged, and dress and vanity fill the place of sobriety and prayer! How soon will the true followers of Christ be persecuted, and family devotion, and Christian watchfulness, and all the retiring virtues of holier times disappear!

Thus you have my reasons for thinking this subject important. For these, and others that could be offered, I would watch the public creed relative to the character of God, more tenaciously than at any other point. It is the fortress I would starve in defending, the strong-hold into which I would fly with my children, and feel myself, and teach them to feel, that it is the only safe place to die.

Will the blessed God make me far better acquainted with his character, and never subject me to the awful temptation, of thinking it a light thing to either overlook, or give paramount importance, to any one of the glorious attributes of his nature. Will he cause his name to be known in all lands, and make his praise glorious, wherever there are beings capable of doing him honour.

SERMON L.

THE CHURCH WITH ALL HER INTERESTS SAFE.

Isaiah xlix. 16.

I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

THE Jewish church, during her captivity, would be led to conceive that God had forsaken, and forgotten her. To effectually remove this impression, God by his prophet appeals to one of the tenderest relationships of life. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Thus would he give to Zion, assurance of his unchangeable love. His people should multiply, till the land, where their foes destroyed them, should be too limited for their increased population. Kings and nations should serve them, and do them honour. Zion was dear to him as the apple of his eye. He would engrave her upon the palms of his hands; her walls should be continually before him.

In those days, it was the custom to paint upon the palms of the hands such objects as men wished to remember, in allusion to which custom God assures his people, that he had graven Zion upon the palms of his hands. Thus should her walls be continually before him; he would not forget her a moment, nor suffer any

foe to injure her. We have here a broad and sacred pledge, to be kept in mind by the people of God in all ages, and plead in their prayers, that he will foster and bless his church, and will employ his vigilance and his power to secure her safety, and advance her honours.

Thus is *the church safe*, and the people of God need have no apprehensions, nor weep a tear, but over their own transgressions, and the miseries of that multitude, who will not be pursuaded to take sanctuary in her bosom. I shall argue the safety of the church, from *the firmness and stability of the divine operations*, from what God *has already done* for his church, what he *is now doing*, and what he *has promised to do*.

I. We assure ourselves, that the church is safe, *from the firmness and stability of the divine operations*. I now refer, not merely to the unchangeableness of God, which will lead him to pursue for ever that plan which his infinite wisdom devised; for that plan lies concealed from us; but to that uniform and steady course with which he has pursued every enterprise which his hands have begun. That he is of the same mind, and that none can turn him, is a *thought* full of comfort; but that he has finished every work which he took in hand is a *fact*, which intelligences have witnessed, and one on which we may found our richest expectations.

The worlds which he began to build he finished. Not one was left half formed and motionless. Each he placed in its orbit, gave it light, and laws, and impulse. And ever since this first development of the divine stability, the wheels of Providence have rolled on with steady and settled course. What Omnipotence began, whether to create or to destroy, he rested not till he had accomplished.

When he had become incensed with our world, and

purposed its desolation, with what a firm and steady step did he go on to achieve his purpose. Noah builds the ark, and God prepares the fountains, which, at his word, burst from their entrenchments to drown an impious generation.

How have suns kept their stations, and planets rolled in their orbits, by the steady pressure of the hand of God; by their revolutions measuring out the years of their own duration, and by their velocity urging on the amazing moment when they shall meet in dread concussion, and perish in the contact. How fixed their periods, their risings, their eclipses, their changes, and their transits. And while they roll, how uniform is the return of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. How certain every law of matter, gravitation, attraction, reflection, &c. The very comet, so long considered lawless, how is it curbed and reined in its eccentric orbit, and never yet had power or permission to burn a single world.

How sure is the fulfilment of prophecy. Ages intervening cannot shake the certainty of its accomplishment. Jesus bleeds on Calvary four thousand years subsequently to the promise which that event accomplishes. Cyrus is named in the page of prophecy more than two hundred years before his birth, and at the destined moment becomes the Lord's shepherd, collects the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and builds Jerusalem. The Jews, as prophets three thousand years ago foretold, are yet in exile. The weeping prophet, now at rest, still sees the family he loved peeled and scattered, and the soil that drank his tears, cursed for their sins; and confident that God is true, waits impatient the certain, but distant year of their redemption.

Wretches that dare his power, God will not disturb his plan to punish. The old world flourished one hun-

dred and twenty years after heaven had cursed that guilty race. Sodom was a fertile valley long after the cry of its enormities had entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth. The Amorites were allowed five hundred years to fill up the measure of their iniquity after God had pledged their land to Abram, although Israel wore away the intervening years in bondage. Many a murderer has been overtaken by the hand of justice, half a century past the time of the bloody deed. God will punish all the workers of iniquity, but he waits till the appointed moment. Like the monarch of the forest, he comes upon his enemies, conscious of his strength, with steady but dreadful steps. In his movements there is neither frenzy, passion, nor haste. While his judgments linger, his enemies ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" but let them know, that he has appeared, and discomfited many a foe; and the inference is that *they* must perish too. Whatever God begins, he finishes: no unseen embarrassment can turn his eye from his original purpose.

Now the argument is, that as God has begun to erect a church, he will act in this matter as in all others. If one of light character, a man given to change, had laid the foundation of some mansion, there would still be doubt whether it would ever receive its top-stone. But suppose his character exactly the reverse, and the moment he breaks the ground imagination sees the mansion finished: now only make God the builder and the argument is perfect. Whether we can trace his footsteps or not, he moves on to the accomplishment of his purpose with undeviating course. Every event, in aspect bright or dark, promotes the ultimate increase and establishment of his church. Or shall this be the only enterprise to which his wisdom, his power, or his grace, is inadequate?

In this solitary instance shall he begin to build and not be able to finish? What would be thought of him in hell, if the mystical temple should never receive its top-stone? Its fires may go out, the worm may die, or some infernal genius bridge the gulph. Heaven too would lose all confidence in its King, and every harp be silent.

Thus before we examine the history of the church, or read the promises, if we believe that God ever had a church, we have the strongest possible *presumptive* evidence, that he will watch her interests, will feed the fires upon her altars, will bring her sons from far, and her daughters from the ends of the earth, and will never leave her, nor forsake her. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

II. Our expectations brighten when we see what God *has done* for his church. My first argument went to show, that if God had only laid the corner-stone of this heavenly building, it would rise and be finished. We are now to view the building half erected, and from what *has been done* argue the certainty of its completion. The church has been under the fostering care of heaven too long to be abandoned now.

Let us retrace for a moment a few pages of her history, and we shall see that when the church was low, he raised her; when she was in danger, he saved her. Amid all the moral desolations of the old world, the church never became extinct. And he at length held the winds in his fist, and barred the fountains of the deep, till Noah could build the ark, and the church be housed from the storm.

How wonderful were his interpositions when the church was embodied in the family of Abraham! In

redeeming her from Egyptian bondage, how did he open upon that guilty land all the embrasures of heaven, till they thrust out his people. And he conducted them to Canaan by the same masterly hand. The sea divided, and Jordan rolled back its waters; the rock became a pool, and the heavens rained them bread, till they drank at the fountains, and ate the fruits of the land of promise. Their garments lasted forty years, and the angel Jehovah, in a cloud of light, led them through the labyrinths and dangers of the desert.

When the church diminished, and her prospects clouded over, he raised up reformers. Such were Samuel, and David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and Daniel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah: such were all the prophets. Each in his turn became a master-builder, and the temple rose, opposition notwithstanding.

Again, under the apostles, how did her prospects brighten. In three thousand hearts, under a single sermon, commenced the process of sanctification. The very cross proved an engine to erect her pillars; the flames lighted her apartments, and the blood of the martyrs cemented the walls of her temple, and contributed to its strength and beauty. Every dying groan alarmed the prince of hell, and shook the pillars of his dreary domain

But the church again sunk, and hell presumed that her ruin would be soon achieved, when the sixteenth century lifted upon her the dawn of hope. In Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and Zuinglius, her interests found able advocates. They appeared at the very juncture when the sinking church needed their courage and their prayers. Like some mighty constellation, which bursts from the east at the hour of midnight, they rose when moral darkness was almost total, and like that of Egypt

could seem to be felt. By their aid the church emerged from the wilderness. By their courage her grand enemy was made to tremble on his ghostly tribunal. The power of the Pope had then outgrown the strength of every civil arm. Every monarch in Europe was at his feet. Till Luther rose no power could cope with him. There was a true church, but she had no champion. The followers of Jesus paid for the privilege of discipleship with their blood. He who dared to be guided by his own conscience, committed an offence that could not be pardoned. The heavenly-minded saw no relief but in death, and thirsted for the honour of a martyrdom that would place them in a world where conscience might be free. But God appeared and redeemed his people. The theme is pleasant, but time would fail me to rehearse what God has done for his church. Every age has recorded the interpositions of his mercy; and every land where there is a remnant of his church, bears some monument that tells to his honour, and which will endure till the funeral of the world.

Now the argument is, that he who has done so much for his church will never abandon her. If he would float her above a drowning world, would redeem her from bondage, would escort her through the desert, would rain her bread from heaven, would reprove kings for her sake, would stop the sun to aid her victories;—with his smiles, light the glooms of her dungeon, and by his presence cool the fires of the stake, there can be no fear for her safety.

God *will do* just such things for Zion as he *has done*. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." His arm is not shortened, nor his ear heavy. The church was never nearer his heart than *now*. And he now hates her enemies as really as did he Pharaoh, Sen-

nacherib, Nero, or Julian. He then governed the world for the sake of his church; and for her sake he governs it still, "The Lord's portion is his people." We know not that he ever had but one object in view in the events that have transpired in our world; and that one the honour of his name in the redemption of his people: and this object sways his heart still. The destruction of the enemy is a part of the same plan. Still may the church invoke the Lord God of Elijah, may rest under the protection of the God of Bethel, and wrestle with the Angel of Penuel. If she should be in bondage there will rise another Moses, another cloud will conduct her out of Egypt, and the same heavens will rain her manna. If darkness should overshadow her, there will be found among the sons she hath brought up, another Luther, Calvin, or Knox, to take her by the hand, to protect her honours, and recruit her strength. Shame on the Christian who knows her history, and yet is afraid. Afraid of what? That God will cease to defend the apple of his eye? Afraid that the city graven upon the palms of his hands may be captured and destroyed? If God continue to do such things as he *has done*, the church with all her retinue is safe. "God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

III. God *is* doing *now* just such things as he has done. We saw laid the corner-stone, and drew thence our *first* argument. Then we saw the building half erected, and were furnished with a *second*. We are now to view the edifice covered with builders, and from their exertions derive our *third*. We may now reason from things that our eyes can see. We may appeal for testimony to the very saw and hammer, and make the scaffold speak.

It may be that some who are present are not sensible

in what a day of heavenly exploit they live. Do you know what amazing events are transpiring? Have you learned that Bible societies are forming in every part of Christendom? and that the Scriptures are now read in perhaps a hundred languages, in which, till lately, not a text of inspired truth was ever written? Do you know that the late editions of God's word have commenced their circulation, are traversing the desert, taming the savage, and pouring celestial light on eyes that never met its beams before?

Do you know the prevalence of a missionary spirit? Have you learned, that youth of the first character, of the fairest prospects, and of both sexes, aspire to be missionaries of the cross? Some have gone, and others wait impatiently till your charity shall send them.

Many a mother has devoted her daughter to the work, and waits for opportunity to give her the parting kiss; and many a daughter, on whom has fallen Harriet's mantle, aches to visit her tomb, and rest under the same turf till Jesus bids them rise. And what daughter of Zion is not ambitious of a martyrdom like hers?

How numerous and extensive the revivals, which at present we witness in our land! Even where there is no stated ministry, the showers of grace descend, and the waste places are made fertile. What other page of the Church's history, but the present, could record an almost universal concert of prayer? Christians of every continent employing the same hour in the same supplications. How unparalleled the success of every Christian enterprise! No plan of mercy ever fails. The active Christian is amazed at the result of his own exertions.

Much that God is *now doing* is evidently preparatory

to *future operations*. Bible and missionary societies may be viewed as the accumulated energies of the Church. Hitherto our exertions have been insulated and feeble. The little streams fructified the plains through which they flowed, but could easily be dammed or evaporated; but their junction has formed a mighty river, destined to penetrate every moral desert, and carry civilization to every province of our desolated world: fed with the showers of heaven, and every day flowing on with deeper and broader channel; the wilds of Arabia, the heaths of Africa, and the plains of Siberia, can oppose no effectual barrier to its influence.

What age but ours was ever blessed with Theological Seminaries, where might be reared, at the expense of charity, young evangelists, to go out and carry the bread of life to a starving world? Fortunes, collected for other purposes, are poured into the treasury of the Lord, and thus are erected batteries to demolish the strong-holds of the prince of hell. Jehovah bless their founders!

Churches and congregations, who, in seasons of coldness, grudged to support the gospel at home, are now equipping young men for the missionary field, and for their own edification. And it has at length become so disreputable to stand idle in these matters, that the man who would save his money, feels himself in danger of losing his character.

Not long since, young men of piety and talents, who longed to fight the battles of the Lord, must equip themselves, and then find poor support in the service. But the scale is turned. Where there is no fortune but piety, a thirst for knowledge, and a talent to improve, the way is now open to all the honours of the camp of Israel. The pious mother, who can only drop her two mites into the treasury of the Lord, but whose example and whose

prayers have saved her son, may bring her Samuel to the altar, to be fed from its offerings, and reared to all the honours of the prophetic office. While I am yet speaking, hope springs up, and a joy not felt in ages past, thrills through all the habitations of pious poverty.

The late revivals possess one peculiar characteristic. There have been among their fruits an unusual number of males. When there was little else that could be done for Zion, but pray and weep, and love her doctrines, and glow with heavenly affections, the *feebler sex* could furnish the Christian world with soldiers. But now, when the kingdom of darkness must be stormed, Zion needs the aid of her *sons*, and God, it would seem, accommodates the operations of his Spirit to the interests of his Church. Paul was not converted till his help was needed, and it was not needed till the gospel was to be carried to the Gentiles. Every revival of late contradicts that libel long legible on the records of infidelity. *That religion evinces its emptiness by its exclusive operation upon the feebler part of our race.* Recently the strong and muscular, the very champions of the host of hell, have fallen before the power of truth, and are harnessed for its defence. Moreover, men of science, and of strong mind, have in their own esteem become fools, and have sat down to learn truth at a Saviour's feet. Our late revivals have penetrated schools and colleges. Satan's cause has been well pleaded, and God now intends to plead his own: and palsied will be the tongue that is silent.

Does God without design raise up these instruments? Would one pass through a whole kingdom, and employ every skilful mechanic, unless he intended to erect some mighty edifice? If, then, we see God enlisting *men* in his service, *men of strength* and *science*, does he not

intend to achieve some wondrous design? Assuredly the heavenly building will rise. These talents will be, and they are already employed in extending Emanuel's empire. India, with other benighted lands, has already received our missionaries, and her Moloch, with all his cursed family of gods, sicken at their prospect. The dark places of his empire have been explored, and the sceptre begins to tremble in his palsied hand. And poor Africa, more debased still, has found a tongue to plead her cause. Conscience, long asleep, and deaf to her rights has waked, and now, her sons, fed at the table of charity, are preparing to carry her the bread of life. My country, deeper in her debt than all other lands, has begun to pay its long arrears.

Who could have hoped, a few years since, that he should ever see a day like this? If, twenty years since, one had told me that *sixty* years would so electrify the Christian world, I should have believed him visionary, and, like the unbelieving Samaritan, should have pronounced it impossible, unless God should make windows in heaven, and rain Bible and Missionary Societies from above: but God has done it all without a miracle. And blessed be his name – will those present join me in the thank-offering?—blessed be his name, that he cast us upon such an age as this. Blessed be his name, that we were not born a century sooner. Then we had never seen the dawn of this millennial morning, nor heard the glad tidings which now reach us by every mail, nor had an opportunity, as now, to purchase for our offspring, an interest in the Lord's fund. Charity was then in a deep sleep. India bowed to her idols, and Africa wore her chains, unpitied and unrelieved. Buchanan and Wilberforce, angels of mercy, were then unborn. Infidelity then desolated the fairest provinces

of Christendom, and wars were the applauded achievements of states and empires.

But the age of infidelity has gone by, and the bloody clarion has breathed out, I hope, its last accursed blast. Events are transpiring which bid fair to bind all nations in the bonds of love. I had *read* of such a period, but how could I hope to *see* it? The present repose of nations augurs well for the Church. Christendom can now unite her efforts to evangelize the world, while the sailor and the soldier have leisure and opportunity to read the precious Scriptures. And must not all this put our unbelief to the blush, and cover us with shame?

The past twenty years have so outdone our highest hopes, as to render it impossible to predict what twenty more may do. God has begun to work on a scale *new* and *grand;* and the inference is that he will go on. After what we have seen, we could hardly be surprised if twenty years to come should put the Bible into every language under heaven, and should send missionaries, more or less, to every benighted district of earth. Let benevolent exertion increase in the ratio of the past seven years, and God add his blessing, and half a century will evangelize the world, tame the lion and the asp, and set every desert with temples, devoted to the God of heaven. When the bosom of charity shall beat a little stronger, if there should be the necessity, men will sell houses or farms to save the heathen from hell, and the child will sit down and weep, who may not say, that his father and mother were the friends of missions. And what parent would entail such a curse upon his children, and prevent them from lifting up their heads in the millennium. I had rather leave mine toiling in the ditch, there to enjoy the luxury of reflecting, that a father's charity made them poor. Poor! They are poor who cannot feel for the

miseries of a perishing world; whom God has given abundance, but who grudge to use it for his honour. Teach your children charity, and they can never be poor. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." Can this promise fail? Then we can all leave our children rich, and the heirs too of a fortune they can never squander. We can purchase for them the privilege of drawing upon the exhaustless resources of heaven. What a privilege now to be a *parent!*

But I must return to the argument. God is doing so much for his church, as to warrant the inference that he will do still more. The hopes he raises he will gratify. The prayer he indites, he will answer. To see what God is doing, I find it impossible to doubt his intentions. The present is a prelude to brighter scenes. God would not have done so much for his people had he intended to abandon them. The church will live and prosper. Instead of trembling for the ark, let us weep that we ever thought it in danger.

IV. We build the same expectations on the *promises* and *prophecies*. The building which we see rising God has promised to finish. He has all the materials; the silver and the gold are his. He has enlisted the builders, and prepared the necessary instruments. The decree has gone forth that Jerusalem must be built, and God will redeem his own gratuitous pledge: he will do as he has said.

Early in the reign of Emanuel there will be universal peace. The nations are to 'beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks." "The wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all" God's "holy mountain." "They

shall sit, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid."

But "the gospel must first be published among all nations." On this promise there pours at present a stream of heavenly light. The angel "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth," is beginning to publish it "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Kings are to be to the church nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers; and they have already taken hold of the work with interest. Their charity, their influence, and their prayers, have already contributed to deepen and widen the channel of that river which is making glad the city of God. In the progress of this work a nation shall be born in a day. The instance of Eimeo may be considered as embraced in this promise. "Thy watchmen shall see eye to eye." This promise has commenced its accomplishment in the harmony manifested in the formation and support of Sabbath schools, and Bible and Missionary societies. The Jews are to return to their land, and to the God of their fathers. There shines some light upon this promise. Many are at present migrating to Palestine from the north of Europe, some have been converted to the faith of Jesus, many not converted are members of Bible societies, and exertions unparalleled are making to bring them to the light, while individuals of their number are proclaiming to their deluded brethren, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Soon the Bible will supplant the Talmud.

"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Who does not see this promise fast accomplishing? Her chains are falling, and her mind expanding. There have commenced a train of operations that promise the richest blessings to the children of Ham. Soon the Gambia, the Niger, and the Nile, will grace their

shores with Christian temples, will lend their waters to fertilize a gospel land, and bear to his station the zealous missionary. In the mean time the wretched Arab, exchanging his Koran for the Bible, and tamed by its influence to honest industry, will settle the quarrel with the family of Jacob, and worship in the same temple.

If we turn to the threatenings against the enemies of the Church, there open before us large fields of promise. Like the cloud that severed Pharaoh's hosts from Israel, they pour impenetrable darkness into the camp of the enemy, while they light the tents of Jacob. "The day of the Lord shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord; that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Perhaps the complicated miseries which began in the French revolution, and were finished at Waterloo, might commence the accomplishment of this threatening. But doubtless other storms will yet beat upon the camp of the enemy, more tremendous than any thing which they have yet experienced. Some believe that the fifth vial has not yet been poured out upon the seat of the beast; and all agree that the forty and two months, during which the holy city must be trodden under foot, are not yet expired. It is acknowledged that the period is twelve hundred and sixty years, and that it commenced with the reign of the beast, and will probably terminate in the present century. Possibly our dear chidren may live to see the precious moment that shall close the period. Then the messenger of the covenant shall make his glorious ingress, shall destroy his enemies, shall purify the sons of Levi, and cleanse the offering of Judah. Then the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth,

as the waters cover the sea. Jesus shall take possession of the inheritance promised, "and his dominion shall be from sea, even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Can the dejected Christian *read* all this, and *believe* it all, and despondingly weep still? And for what does he weep? God has begun to erect a heavenly temple; the work has never stopped, and he promises that it never shall. He never did abandon any work which he began, nor did there ever drop from his lips a promise that was not, or will not be fulfilled And what more can he do? Christian, you may weep on, but let your tears be tears of penitence or joy. Every harp should be snatched from the willows, new joys should be felt, and new anthems sung in all the assemblies of the saints. He that *shall* come, *will* come, and will not tarry; and every bosom should respond, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

APPLICATION.

1. If to any it is a burden to join in the general concert of prayer for Zion's increase, they can excuse themselves, and the glorious work will still go on. There are those who consider the duty a privilege. If the Church could live without them, and duty did not prompt them to pray, they would weep to be denied the privilege of bearing her interests to the throne, and of waiting for the redemption of Israel. Such may wait still upon the Lord, and may wait with confidence, that every prayer will be answered, every tear preserved, and every hope accomplished. But are there those who would wish to be excused from this service? who have no pleasure in the duty, and no faith in the promises? Well, they can

act their pleasure, and the church will live. But, whether such will have any share in the glories of that kingdom, whose approach they dread, "demands a doubt."

2. If any grudge to contribute of their wealth, for the advancement of the Church, they can withhold. If they have a better use for their money, or dare not trust the Lord, there is no compulsion. *Some happy beings* will have the honour of the work. It is to be accomplished by the instrumentality of men, and if any are willing to be excused, and insist on doing nothing, they can use their pleasure. And if such would ruin their children, by holding them back, they can. They can form them to such habits that the world will never be disturbed by their munificence. They can prejudice them against all the operations of Christian charity; can make them deaf to the cry of the six hundred millions; can keep them ignorant of what the Christian world is doing, and what God has commanded *them* to do. And there can then be very little doubt but they will have children in their own likeness. But whether God will not finally lay claim to their wealth, and cause it to be expended in beautifying his holy empire, we dare not assert. The silver and the gold are his.

But the work will go on. *Once* our fears on the subject were great. We doubted whether the Christian world would ever give the heathen the gospel. But our fears are removed. We have now no apprehension as to the issue, and can only pity those who are blind to their duty, their interest, their honour, and their happiness.

3. If any are willing to remain out of the kingdom of Christ, they can act their pleasure in this matter too, and yet the marriage supper will be full. The kingdom of

Christ will be large enough; large as he expected, large as he desired, large as the Father promised; large enough to gratify the infinite benevolence of his heart. If any do not wish to live in heaven, the mansions they might have filled will be occupied by others. The celestial choir will be full, and the name of Jesus will receive its deserved applauses from myriads who shall he redeemed from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

If sinners can do without God, he can do without them. They will not be forced, reluctantly, to the marriage supper of the Lamb. There will be enough who will come willingly. Heaven will be as happy as it would be if more were saved. And the prison of despair will contain exactly that number, whose ruin will exhibit to the best advantage the character of Jehovah: and the smoke of their torment, which shall ascend up forever and ever, will form a stupendous column on which will be written, legible to all heaven, HOLINESS, JUSTICE, TRUTH.

The vast accession made to the church in the late revivals, and the still greater increase in the future years of millennial glory, will swell the number of the saved beyond all calculation. Sinners who now join the multitude, and are thus secured from present reproach, will soon find themselves attached to an insignificant and despicable minority. It would seem at present that the number of the lost will be great, but you may multiply them beyond the power of human enumeration, and still there is no fear but the number of the saved will be greater.

If any, then, would prefer to remain out of the kingdom, they have their choice, and the shame and ruin will be their own. God intends to let them do as they please, and those who love his kingdom most, anxious as they

now are for the salvation of their fellow-men, will at last be satisfied with the number of the saved. We invite none to become the subjects of Christ's kingdom, but those who will esteem his yoke easy and his burden light.

4. If any should be disposed to enter into league with the lost angels, and oppose the Church, they can do so, and still the Church will live. Earth and hell united, can make no effectual opposition to her interests. God is in the midst of his people, and will help them, and that right early. In these circumstances, one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Some opposition is necessary to awaken her energies. Solomon was seven years building the first temple, when all was peace; but Ezra, with the trowel in one hand, and the sword in the other, could build the second in four. The enemy has always promoted the interest he wished to destroy. God will make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. If any would make opposition to the growing interests of Emanuel, they can; but they will accomplish their own ruin, and perhaps the ruin of their children. It never was so dangerous as now to be the enemy of Christ's kingdom. All such must be crushed under the wheels of that car, in which the Son of God is riding in triumph through a conquered empire. To make opposition is as unavailing as if a fly should make an effort to stop the sun. There await the enemies of the cross, certain defeat, shame, and ruin. "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come down upon his own pate." In the mean time the Church is safe. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

5. Fathers and brethren in the ministry, this subject will raise your hopes. Are you stationed where it is all darkness around you, and have the hosts of hell alarmed you? cheer up your hearts. Try to penetrate the surrounding darkness, and you will soon be convinced that your fears are ill-timed. Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward. If night does seem to hover about us, still is it manifest that the day has dawned upon the hills. The Church has never been in danger, and we ought to be ashamed of our fears. Be at your watch-tower, dear brethren; turn your eye to the east, and you will soon descry the light. If there is any truth in the promise, and if a thousand transpiring events can speak, we shall soon have opportunity to hail Emanuel at his second coming. If our courage fails us in a day like this, we have only to lie down and die with shame. While the victory was doubtful, you might be afraid, and yet save your character, but none are afraid now but the coward. Shall we hesitate to die, if necessary, in securing a victory already gained; and to gain which the Captain of our salvation, and many of his soldiers have spilt their blood? Our missionary brethren have carried the standard of the cross, and planted it within the entrenchments of the enemy, and their courage has not failed; and shall we tremble in the camp? We shall then have no share in the spoil. Dear brethren, I will not insult you; you are not afraid; you will die at your post, and the victory will be secured.

6. Dear Christian brethren, you see the royal canopy which your Lord casts over your heads; or rather the shield he spreads before you. If you are not officers in the camp of Israel, you are soldiers; if you may not command, you may fight, but not with carnal weapons. Let the subject raise your courage. A few more conflicts

and your toils are ended; the church is safe, and you are safe. Only believe, and soon you will see the salvation of God. And as the Saviour approaches, and you see him, you may say with the prophet, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

SERMON LI.

THE INDEX SURE.—No. I.

Gen. xlix. 10.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Jacob was now very near to the close of life, and had strong apprehensions that his end might be at hand. But he had yet to deliver to his children his dying benediction. He accordingly called them about him, and rehearsed to them the future history of their respective families, for ages to come. Of Judah he predicted, that he should stand high in the esteem and respect of his brethren, should overthrow his enemies, and should bear rule over his father's children. He should come upon his enemies with all the strength and the daring with which a lion comes down from the mountains, seizes and bears up his prey, while no one dares to interrupt his course, or rouse him when he has betaken himself to rest. His land should be so abundant in vines, that he might fasten his beast to their branches, and wash his vestments in the blood of the grape. He should have a dominion so permanent, that nothing should interrupt it till the advent of Messiah, who should gather the nations about him, and hold the sceptre for ever.

That part of this famous prediction, on which I purpose to enlarge, has attracted the attention and confirm-

ed the faith of believers in every age since. We see here selected a single family, who for ages should constitute his church, to the exclusion of all others; with whom he would deposit his law, and all that was divulged of his purpose. One branch of this family should be honoured above the others, should give birth to the Messiah and hold the authority till he come. Thus the world shall expect their Redeemer, shall know where and when to look for him, and if prepared to receive him, shall be in no danger of imposition. The text is one of those scriptures that marked out the time when the Messiah should appear.

By the word sceptre we are no doubt to understand the ensign or badge of authority. The word signifies a rod or staff, and hence came to mean a sceptre; as kings, when they sat upon their thrones, used to hold in their hand a rod as a token of their authority. Hence, when Esther presented herself to the king, he reached out to her the golden sceptre.

The text gives us no intimation when Judah should rise to dominion, but when he should take the sceptre into his hand it should not depart till the coming of Shiloh. We know that for a long time after the delivery of this inspired benediction the government of Israel was not in the tribe of Judah Moses, their first ruler, was of the tribe of Levi. The judges were of several different tribes. Saul, the first king, was of the tribe of Benjamin. But David, his successor, was of the tribe of Judah; and in him six hundred years after the prediction, the authority commenced which is noticed in the text, and which continued till the coming of the promised Shiloh.

The Jews, to evade the force of this prophecy, would have the word translated sceptre, to mean the rod of correction, which, they say, shall not depart from Judah

till Shiloh come and liberate them. But this exposition is contrary, in the first place, to the whole tenor of the context, which assigns to Judah power, glory, and victory. It would be very singular if one clause of the benediction would give him the pride, the strength, and the independence of a lion, and another clause make him the subject of perpetual oppression. In the second place, this exposition would be contrary to matters of historical fact, which the Jews themselves would not have the folly to contradict. Judah was at no one period signalized as a sufferer. The rod of oppression came earlier, and fell heavier, and continued longer on the other tribes than on Judah. And as Judah is the only tribe that returned entire after the captivity, it would seem the only one from which the rod of oppression did depart. But it is only hatred to the light, that has led that unbelieving people to this interpretation. The ancient Jews, and all who have understood the language of the Old Testament in its original, and have had no particular inducement to pervert the text, have rendered the word sceptre.

And the next clause still farther explains this, "Nor a law-giver from between his feet." It is natural that a sceptre be in the hands of a law-giver. But some have chosen to render the word *scribe* instead of *law-giver*, and would have us understand by it one who is employed in writing laws, either civil or ecclesiastical. If this rendering could be justified it would not much vary the sense. But it is believed that this rendering cannot be justified, as the Hebrews use for scribe another word. Hence the passage means, that there shall be in Judah till the coming of Shiloh, a law-giver as well as the ensign of authority. The kind of government is not specified, nor is it important, as the truth of the prophecy will

be evident, if it shall appear that there was in the tribe of Judah any species of authority down to the advent of the Redeemer.

That by Shiloh we are to understand the Messiah there will be little doubt. The word thus rendered is used only in this place, yet is allowed by all classes of commentators to refer to the Redeemer. Some interpret it a peace-maker, a Saviour; others a preserver, a deliverer; and others still, with greater probability, the sent, or one to be sent. This idea exactly comports with the attitude in which the Saviour is presented to us in the Old Testament, as the angel of the covenant, the angel Jehovah. Hence, in the New Testament, he is spoken of as him that was to come. The woman of Samaria said to our Lord, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak to thee am he." The Jewish expositors are generally agreed that the text has reference to the Saviour.

Their quibble about the word which we render until, but discovers their weakness and their obstinacy. It is compounded of two particles, one they render *forever* and the other *because*, and read the text thus: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet forever, because Shiloh shall come." But beside that this construction is forced, it would not comport whith facts, which they must all acknowledge. For while they generally deny that the Messiah has come, they will not deny that now the sceptre has departed from Judah. Some of them have been so cramped on this subject as to adopt the absurdity that the Messiah has come, but keeps himself hidden because of their wickedness. Thus men will make the word of God to mean any thing rather than not support their

favourite scheme; and when the text proves too obstinate to be resisted, will adopt the most improbable conjectures to prop the fabric of falsehood. But error is forever thus changeable and uncertain. Like the fabled isle of Delos it forever fluctuates, nor can men or devils give it permanent location. If one would be entirely certain that modern Unitarianism has no foundation in truth, he has only to compare the shifts of its advocates, with the endlessly varying conjectures of the Jews since the death of Christ, to rid themselves of the conviction that he has already come and set up his kingdom. In either community they hold you in suspense forever. When they should inform what the text does mean, they only bewilder you with illusions, and brow beat you with assertions of what it cannot mean, and must not mean, and finally, if they would be honest, what it shall not mean. Nothing but truth is plain and consistent: error is inconsistent, not only with truth but with itself.

I. Is it then a fact that there continued to be a sceptre and a law-giver in the tribe of Judah down to the time of the Saviour? On this point a little inquiry will give, it is presumed, entire satisfaction. Down to the captivity there will be no doubt. And if during that period there should seem to have been a suspension of Judah's authority, still it is a fact that there was no transfer of authority to any other tribe. And if for that short space we could see no remains of authority, it should not be considered as nullifying the prediction. Seventy years, in a period so long as that which intervened between the delivery of this prediction and the coming of Christ, would be too insignificant to be excepted in a general prophecy. But the fact seems to be, that the tribe of Judah did hold its ascendency even during the period of their dispersion. We are assured that the king of

Babylon took from prison, and treated with marked kindness, Jehoiachin, king of Judah, thirty-seven years after his captivity; and it is said that he set his throne above the throne of the kings that were in Babylon: and Jehoiachin we know was of the tribe of Judah. Thus the sceptre did not depart, even when that tribe had its residence in a strange land. Daniel too, we know, was of the tribe of Judah, and was made governor over the whole province of Babylon, and of course over the children of the captivity. And we have no reason to doubt but that the Jewish writers assert the truth when they assure us that the successive governors of the exiled Jews, continued to be selected from the tribe of Judah and the house of David. So Zorobabel and Nehemiah are both said to have been of the tribe of Judah.

And when afterward the civil power was vested principally in the Sanhedrim, still the sceptre must doubtless be considered as remaining in the tribe of Judah. That the Sanhedrim had very great power there will be no question. That council was instituted by the Lord himself, an account of which we have in the eleventh chapter of Numbers. And they were not dispersed nor wholly disrobed of power up to the time when they sat in judgment on the Son of God. From the close of the captivity to the destruction of the temple, this body continued to be the great council of the nation. At first they were to be chosen from all the tribes, but after their return from Babylon, they were principally of the house of Judah, though occasionally of Levi and of Benjamin. But these two tribes were amalgamated with, and as it were, lost in the tribes of Judah, and whatever they might do was done by virtue of authority derived from the tribe with which they had become incorporated. Hence the sceptre did not depart.

Even when the Romans appointed them a king, still the Sanhedrim had large powers. Even Herod the Great was tried for his life before that court. If it should be said that their authority was in a great measure neutralized, when Judea became a Roman province, and an Idumæan was constituted their Sovereign, still it was not wholly destroyed. They long contended with Herod about the supreme authority, nor could they be prevailed upon to take the oath of loyalty till after the birth of the Saviour. At the time of his arrest we find them still embodied, and sitting to hear evidence and pass judgment upon him who had come to be their king. True, they had lost the power, as we term it, of life and death, and might not proceed to the crucifixion till they had obtained the assent of Pilate. But although their power was evidently languishing it did not expire till Titus demolished the sanctuary.

II. Our next inquiry is, whether from that period all authority did cease from the tribe of Judah. If this shall appear, then are we certain that the promised Shiloh has come. And whether in that case he be the Messiah, or some other personage, there can be but little doubt. That the tribe of Judah did actually lose all authority at that time, and has never recovered it, there cannot be a question. That tribe has never had since then any distinct existence. No descendant of Abraham will now pretend to tell you to which tribe he belongs. He may assure you that when the Messiah comes he will restore them to their respective tribes, but till then they remain by their own confession an undistinguished mass of Israelites. And there is no sceptre or law-giver among them. This will be acknowledged by every man who has any common acquaintance with history.

Their condition is exactly the opposite of all that can be termed rule or authority. They are scattered among the nations of the earth; have scarcely any of them a fixed habitation, and none of them the least shade of authority. There is hardly a kingdom in the world, where they have not been excluded, not merely from any share in the national government, but even from the common rights of citizenship.

The woes that Moses predicted, have fallen upon them, and they are cursed in the city and cursed in the field; cursed in their basket and in their store; cursed in their children and in the fruit of their land; cursed when they go out and when they come in; and in all that they set their hand unto for to do.

They have planted vineyards, and another has gathered the grapes. They have become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word. They have served their enemies in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and have worn upon their neck a yoke of iron. They have sodden and subsisted upon their own children. Their plagues and their sicknesses have been sore and wonderful. The Lord has seemed to rejoice over them to destroy them, and bring them to nought, and scatter them among all nations. They have found no rest to the sole of their foot; have had a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind. They have been in fear day and night, and have been sold to their enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, till none would buy them. Precisely this has been their condition more than two thousand years. If Moses had written their history yesterday, instead of two and thirty hundred years ago, it had hardly been possible to pen it more correctly. Hence we need offer no arguments to prove that the law-giver and the sceptre departed from Judah at the time predicted.

Whatever pretence that wretched people may make, that somewhere, no one knows where, there is yet in that tribe the badge of power, and the right of legislation; no man of common understanding, and not blinded to the last degree, will listen for a moment to such desperate arguments in support of their obstinacy and their unbelief.

III. It remains that we inquire whether he who came, at the time when the Jews expected their Shiloh, has exhibited the sign given of him in the text: "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." By some this clause is made to mean, him shall the people obey, or to him shall the people hearken, and again, to him shall all the kingdoms of the earth be subject. Hence Christ is styled in Haggai, the desire of all nations. Now you remember that in the original promise made to Abraham, it was said, that in his seed, by which is meant the Redeemer, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Hence the Shiloh mentioned in the text, is he to whom the Gentiles shall seek, whose instruction they shall receive, whose precepts they shall obey, to whom they shall be subject, in whom they shall be blessed, and to whom they shall be gathered. All this must appear in him who shall answer the description given in the text of Shiloh.

We remember that very early in the gospel history, while yet salvation was scarcely offered to any but the Jews, the Gentiles seemed more ready than they to become his disciples. It is true that a few churches were very early gathered among the Jews, but the principal success of the gospel was among the Gentiles. The dispersion that took place on the death of Stephen, seconded by the conversion of Cornelius, soon showed the world that the Jews had ceased to be God's people and that in every nation he that feareth God and

worketh righteousness is accepted of him. Soon churches were established in many places among the Gentiles, and from that day to this the gospel has been making its way through the nations, and the people have been gathered to the Lord Jesus.

Now here lies the proof of his Messiahship, that the religion he taught, and the means he used to propagate it, should gather him disciples so rapidly and so extensively. And had there been no other proof that he was the predicted Shiloh, this one should have been sufficient long since to convince the Jews that he whom they still expect, has come. On the supposition that the Lord Jesus Christ was not the promised Messiah, and of course that no divine power gives efficacy to his gospel, nothing can be more surprising than the promptness with which he gathers disciples. And this was the very sign given, "to him shall the gathering of the people be." Now if any Jews or Gentiles are not prepared to receive him in the character of their Redeemer, they must account for the success of his gospel. It was never propagated with the sword; it asks no support from human power and human law, but has made its silent way in direct opposition to the powers of earth and hell.

The very nature of the religion of Christ renders its propagation a proof of his Messiahship. It can adopt no system of compromise with any other religion. It must be either rejected, or adopted as the only one that can bring men to happiness and God. The Saviour is not to be worshipped in conjunction with Jupiter, and Moloch, and Diana. He must have the supreme regard, and every idol must be abandoned. Hence his religion, when it began its course, was at war with every other, in every town or city where it was attempted to be propaga-

ted, and the smallest success in these circumstances must have been a demonstration that its author was divine.

And what is more, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ found the bitterest enmity in every heart it attempted to subdue. It demanded on its first presentation at the door of him it would redeem, that he be radically changed, that he love what he hated and hate what he loved. Hence our Lord would not deceive his disciples, but told them that he came not to send peace but a sword. Still with just such a religion as this, the Lord Jesus gathered disciples, and continues to gather them, while every native passion of the soul is at war with the Saviour, and the doctrines it is invited to embrace.

The character of the Saviour, when presented to the people that were to be gathered to him, was awfully forbidding. Aside from the consideration that he was the enemy of all sin and they totally depraved; his humble ingress, the meanness of his parentage and his birth, and the ignominy of his crucifixion, all tended to render it wholly improbable that he should ever gain adherents, and still men of the most towering views became his disciples, even some of the members of the Sanhedrim.

And what seemed an insurmountable barrier, he chose as the instruments who should propagate his gospel, men from the lowest walks of life, fishermen and tent-makers. These were to go and plead his name before kings and emperors. Still under all these embarrassments the people were gathered to him, and his religion spread throughout the civilized world. How then could the Jews, or how can the unbelievers in the present day, doubt that Jesus was the promised Shiloh, and that his own almighty power gave efficacy to his gospel.

And when we consider again the state of the world,

how exactly the opposite of that religion, unbelief is put to still deeper confusion. We can hardly read without a blush, the account that Paul gives us of the state of morals anterior to the gospel, among the very men to whom it was published. I will read you a part of that description. He says, "Men were filled with all unrighteousness." (Rom. i. 29–32.) Now it was among just such beings as these that the gospel had to make its way. Such were the people that the Lord Jesus would gather to him, or if he failed, did not claim to be owned as the promised Shiloh. We are all ready to say that the Jews had no excuse for rejecting their Messiah. But let us not forget that the light which thus poured upon the page of prophecy, and pointed out to the Jews their Shiloh so distinctly that we wonder at their unbelief, is still increasing. The council that condemned him, and the man who betrayed him, and the multitude who exulted in his agonies, had less evidence that he was the Son of God than we have, and had a better excuse for their unbelief than we. They had sufficient light to condemn them, but we have still more. They saw his gospel have some success, and were under obligation to believe; we see it operating on almost all nations, and are under still increased obligation to embrace and love him. We all join to condemn the Jews for their unbelief, but it would not be wonderful if we perish under a more aggravated condemnation.

SERMON LII.

THE INDEX SURE.—No. II.

Genesis xlix. 10.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

We can conceive of few things in the creation in which there is more of the sublime, than in a prediction like this, given several thousand years since, and recorded for the successive generations to read, while they witness its fulfilment. There is seen in such an object, concentrated all that wisdom and power that built the universe. He who can predict what shall be, must know, as is said of God "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not." And to foretell with certainty he must have power to bring to pass. It involves, too, a divine purpose, by which all the events that are future are made certain. Under a government where things were left to the control of chance, or accident, there could be no such certainty, even if we suppose the existence of a mind that can foresee the most distant tracts of time. Hence, to contemplate a subject like this, gives to the mind a sublimity of elevation, and tends to fill it with adoring thoughts of the Creator. And still it feels its own littleness; for where there is so much of God, all beside is insignificant and worthless. And there are no contemplations more calculated to soothe and comfort the believing mind. He who can know and

predict all the events that will happen, can provide for his people in all the emergencies into which they may be brought.

In illustrating the text, in the former discourse, it was my design, first, to explain the terms; secondly, to show that there did continue a sceptre and a law-giver in the tribe of Judah down to the advent of the Redeemer; thirdly, to show that from and after that time there did cease all authority and power in that branch of the house of Israel; and, finally, that to the Lord Jesus the people have been gathered, as it was predicted they should be, to the promised Shiloh. What remains now is, that we make some practical use of the whole. I would then

REMARK,

1. The subject will lead us to *admire* the *divine conduct*. Where he requires faith, there he accumulates evidence in such profusion, that every mind not decidedly hostile to truth, must yield its assent. He had promised the world that he would send them a Redeemer; hence, when that Redeemer should come, he would require all to receive him, and that their faith might not want for evidence, he poured in upon the man Christ Jesus, the concentrated light of a thousand ages. And it ought to cover the unbeliever with shame, to know that such was the precision with which he was designated, that even devils know him. The first promise was, that he should be the seed of the woman. And at that time it would have been of no use to have made the promise more definite. At the time of the deluge it was rendered certain, without any specific promise, that the Saviour must be of the family of Noah. But his family soon became so numerous, that the believer could not know where to look for the promised seed. He might

be born near the spot where the ark rested, or in some far-distant isle of the ocean. Hence, God made choice of Abraham, and gave him the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and directed him to go to that land, where he would still farther limit the line of descent, and where the Saviour should himself be born. When Ishmael was born, Abraham doubtless supposed that he was the promised heir, and he and the world might have looked for the Saviour in his family, had not God given him another son, and promised that in Isaac should his seed be called. In his family again the promise was confirmed to Jacob, and in his to Judah, and in his to David. This was the last limitation as to the line of descent, and the time of the promise was now so nigh that no farther designation was necessary. Here, then, we see pointed out very distinctly the *family* in which the Messiah should be born.

As to the time, it was to be, according to the prediction recorded in Daniel, four hundred and ninety years from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It was to be while yet there was a sceptre and a law-giver in Judah.*

As to the land of his nativity, this was marked out

* The time of his coming was still farther designated by the appearance of John the Baptist: "Behold," said the last but one of the prophets, in the very last words he uttered, "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." And God himself assures us, that this promise of Elias met its fulfilment in John. Thus, lest the precise time should not be recollected, one was sent before him, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." From the multitudes that came to hear him, it becomes certain that John must have given a very extended notice that the Messiah was at hand.

and consecrated to the Lord ages beforehand, in the communications made to Abraham. But lest the extent of Canaan should still cast a cloud upon the promise, the very town was named in which he should be born :— "Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto us that is to rule in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

That still there might be no room for mistake, the angels came from heaven to tell the shepherds that he was born, and to guide them to his humble lodgement. To the wise men of the east there appeared a star that moved before them, and came and stood over the place where the young child lay. Even the Roman emperor must be induced at that juncture to make a decree that all the world should be taxed, that that decree might operate to bring the blessed Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, previously to the birth of the Saviour. Thus wonderfully minute were the pointings of heaven to the infant Redeemer.

And those who had not opportunity to visit his manger, might open the pages of prophecy and read there his character and his history, and rest assured that he who was reported to have been born in Bethlehem was indeed the promised Shiloh. He was to be peculiarly a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: despised and rejected of men. He was to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows ; was to be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. When oppressed and afflicted he was not to open his mouth. Men were to cast lots for his vesture. He was to hang on a tree, but not a bone of him was to be broken. He was to make his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. It was even predicted, that men should buy

the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price at which he was valued. After all this minuteness of prediction, how impossible does it seem that any one should doubt whether he were the promised Messiah. And how must we admire the divine conduct and goodness in thus giving us *many* signs, when, if he had given us but *one*, he might have condemned us if we had not believed. It would seem that it must have been the purpose of God, that no nation or individual then or since, should be able to resist the flood of light that then poured in upon the Saviour of the world, in every inch of his way from the manger to the tomb. Had his name been written the instant he appeared, on the disk of every star; had the finger of a man's hand appeared instantly in every quarter of the heavens, pointing to the immortalized manger; or had a voice said in every ear all that was told the watchful shepherds, the evidence of the ingress of the Son of God would hardly have been more complete.

It must not be forgotten that all these intimations respecting the coming Redeemer, had been written in a book, and lodged in the temple of God, and read in the synagogues throughout all the holy land, every Sabbath day for many hundred years; and we can hardly believe that the report had not penetrated into every section of the globe, where there was a sinner to need an interest in the Redeemer's blood.

2. How provoking must it be to God, when, after all this, men reject his Son. To all who lived in Palestine, all will agree that the sin of unbelief was enormous. They were in the very spot where all this light concentrated. They had read the prophecies—had seen the signs—had beheld the events of Providence shaping themselves to his approach, and probably found it im-

possible not to know that the set time was come. Hence on them we should expect that there would fall a peculiar condemnation. And on them it did fall, and has rested on their children's children down to this very hour. The land itself has been given to desolation, and has withered under the curse ever since. It has become a hissing, a by-word, and a proverb. Its hills have lost their fertility, its fountains have been polluted, and its vines have withered.

But if we suppose that none are guilty for rejecting the Saviour but the Jews, we are as blind as they. There did shine, it is true, upon that generation who rejected him, a peculiar light, but the present generation of that people have far less light than the impenitent of this age, and are less guilty. When they contemptuously spit upon the ground at the mention of the name of Jesus, they despise an unknown Redeemer, in imitation of the impiety of their ancestors. They are virtually heathen, and many of them have no more idea of God, or a futurity, than the idolaters of interior India. But the Bible and a preached gospel have poured upon every Christian land all the light that shone upon Judea, and more still. We have more convincing light than Herod had, that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem during his reign; and more than Judas had that he whom Judas betrayed was the Son of God; and more than Pilate had, that he whom Pilate condemned will one day be Pilate's judge. In addition to the light they had, we have seen the gospel conquering the world in his name. We have seen the sturdiest ruffians bowed and tamed at his feet. We have seen accomplished many a prediction that he uttered, many a wo that he issued, many a curse that he threatened, and many a promise that dropped from his lips. Luminous as was the light that gathered about

the Babe of Bethlehem, there have been pouring in ten thousand other streams ever since. Hence let no sinner conceive, that although it be nineteen centuries since the Saviour died, there can be for him any escape from death, unless he be washed in that Saviour's blood. If he who drove the nails was cursed if he did not believe, he who now crucifies him afresh, and puts him to open shame, will meet a curse no lighter. No, it remains still a crime black as perdition to bar the avenues of the heart against the faith of the Lord Jesus. There is not a man to-day in Christendom, nor a lad, nor a child, that has learned who the Redeemer is, if he reject him to-day, who will not carry home with him guilt enough, if he dies unpardoned, to make him gnash his teeth forever. Had no Saviour been offered, you would only have had to answer for a broken law, but as many of you as are unsanctified have upon you the guilt and the curse of having slighted ten thousand overtures of forgiveness. And if you dare to die in this condition, you can make the sad experiment, but your grave will prove an avenue to the bottomless pit.

3. In view of this subject it seems no light matter to deny the deity of the Son of God. How fearfully were the Jews destroyed because they would not recognize him as the promised Shiloh. When once the edict had gone out, "Let all the angels of God worship him," and God will not give his glory to another, the being that will not obey must perish. He is either God or a creature. But have we credulity enough to believe that there would have been all this display of prophecy and miracle, pointing to the birth of a worm? Must he be promised and proclaimed many thousand years; must there be a record made of his character while yet he has none? Must he make his ingress in the centre of the world, and

in the most luminous spot among the nations? Must a long train of prophets vie with each other in doing honour to the mysterious personage; and when he is born, be but the being of a day? We have heard of

> "Ocean into tempest wrought,
> To waft a feather—or to drown a fly,"

But there are few who will impute to God such folly. But how like this must appear, to him who believes the Messiah was a mere creature—all that train of prophecies, that hyperbole of language, and that pomp of figure that centred in the Babe of Bethlehem? Judas, it seems, had he been appointed to the work, would have been as good and as glorious a Redeemer as Jesus; and still his advent must be predicted it seems four thousand years before his birth, and heaven must tell all the generations between that he is coming, and they must think of him in their loftiest thoughts, and speak of him as heaven does in their sublimest language; must calculate to owe to him their whole redemption, and still he has not power when he has laid down his life to take it up again. *He* indebted to another for his own existence, but *we* must trust in *him* for eternal life; he our shield, and still he has no power of his own to protect; he our guide, but another must enlighten and guide him; he our intercessor, and still he cannot know when we pray; he our king, and still he himself the subject of a higher and a mightier power; he pledged to be with his people always, even unto the ends of the world, while yet he could not know that he should be permitted to see them when they suffer, or be present to save.

If there is a scheme, which, rather than any other, charges God foolishly, makes the plainest truth a mystery, and the whole Bible a bundle of absurdities, and

proudly conducts all its votaries to death, it is that which thus quenches the light of Israel. Must I choose between it and open infidelity, I would be an infidel. By the same dash with which I blot the name of the Redeemer, I would obliterate the Father, and believe the grave the end of me. I would not waste my time and strength, and torture my conscience, to mutilate the Book of God, but would believe the whole a lie, and warm myself in its blaze, and wish I were a brute. Then I would calmly expect one day to be a supper for the worms, free from the dread of the worm that shall never die Men must be desperately the foes of truth, and inveterately hostile to the Lord Jesus, before they can thus rudely confront the plainest truths of God; and the crime, where there is not gross ignorance, must come very near to that which cannot be forgiven. To avoid one mystery which they cannot comprehend, they would throw afloat the faith of the gospel, make us doubt whether any part of it has come to us uncorrupted, and finally must adopt mysteries greater than the one they discard, must believe that God has indited us a revelation which it is almost impossible to understand, and that he has suffered almost his whole Church to live in the belief of a lie these eighteen hundred years.

4. This subject should lead us to pray earnestly for the unhappy descendants of Abraham. We are indebted to them, under God, for the privileges we enjoy, but which they have forfeited. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature, belonged to that family. The apostles through whom we have the Scriptures, and the knowledge of eternal life, were Jewish converts. But how distressing to us, that that whole community should still reject their promised Shiloh, and be seen writhing these two thousand years under the lashes of a vindictive

Providence! It should excite our pity to know that they are a standing testimony of the truth of prophecy. They are placed as a beacon on the shore of death to warn us not to approach the strand where they were so awfully shipwrecked. Their unbelief has confirmed us in the faith, and it should be our grief that they should perish. When the time has come, and it seems now at hand, when they shall own him that has come, their conversion shall be as life from the dead to the Gentiles.

Hence gratitude for the blessings we have received through their hands, and love to the kingdom of Christ, which will be greatly advanced by their in-gathering, and pity for the suffering posterity of him who was the father of the faithful, should all join their influence to induce us to pray for a people so interesting and so undone. Every endearing view we have of Christ should lead us to pray for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and whenever we see by faith the scenes of Calvary, there should go up some petition for the descendants of those who were active in the crucifixion, and coveted that the blood of the Saviour should be on them and their children. On that propitiatory sacrifice we hang our hopes of heaven, and should rejoice can we be the means of bringing down upon the descendants of his betrayers and murderers, any heavenly blessings, or of removing the curse under which they have so long pined and perished.

And if their case should demand something more than prayers—should require sacrifices—can we better expend the talents that God has loaned us than in the purchase of their redemption? It is high time that we placed in their hands the Hebrew Testament, that they may know the character of the Saviour they have rejected, and may see and lament the cause of their long

continued dispersion. Gratitud for the gift of a Saviour through the line of Abraham, and for the Holy Scriptures through Jewish Apostles, should urge us to make exertions for their rescue from the thraldom of unbelief. They would join us in adoring the Saviour, and rejoice with us in the covenants of promise, and we could feel pleasure forever, in having contributed to rescue them from the dominions of death.

Happily the time has come, when they begin to doubt whether they may not look for their Shiloh till their eyes consume away in their holes, unless they build their hopes of eternal life on him who has come. Numbers of them have made their escape from death, and others are inquiring with a candour and a docility, as new as it is interesting, "Where is the angel of the covenant?"

FINALLY, may we not fear, that if we reject the Saviour, there may be found in our families a race of unbelievers, that may go, generation after generation, down to the blackness of darkness forever. How can we know that some families that we can name, in whom we see not a believer from age to age, have inherited from some ungodly ancestor, a ruin like that which fell upon the family of Israel. Poverty, and crime, and degradation, are the prominent features of their condition. Ah, let us beware, lest our children's children shall be telling the world some hundred years hence, the tale of our unbelief and impenitence.

SERMON LIII.

THE WISE MAN WISE FOR FUTURITY.

Deuteronomy, xxxii. 29.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider . . . . . their latter end.

Moses had been speaking of the kindness of God to his people. He found them in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness. He led them about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his eye. By a spirit of prophecy he looked forward, and saw them enter in triumph the land of promise, there to eat of the increase of the field, to suck honey out of the rock, and drink the pure blood of the grape. And here he would gladly have limited his prophetic view, and would have died believing that the people he loved, would remain the heirs of that goodly land till the consummation of all things, and be to the latest ages the chosen inheritance of heaven. But the same prophetic Spirit which had made him acquainted with one future page of their history, penetrated the tracts of time, that stretched still beyond, and unfolded to his inspired vision, a page still beyond, darkened and dismal with crimes and punishments. Here he paused to lament, that they would so sin against their own souls, that they would not feel in time that they had to deal with a jealous God, who

would not give his glory to another, and in the language of the text pours out the honest and tender feelings of his heart, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." This would avert the doom I foresee, and secure them a perpetual title to the fields of promise.

But the text will bear a more extended application. It is as true of us all as it was of Israel, that we contemplate too little the scenes of futurity, and fasten the eye too exclusively on the life that now is. This world is *too much our home;* its cares occupy too exclusively our attention; and its treasures claim too high a place among the instruments of our joy. We are pilgrims at the best, who have here no abiding city, but seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God. That man is a beggar and a wretch, who extends not his views to another life, and has no prospects of enjoyment in a better world. The concerns of this life are too small to engross the energies of an immortal mind. When I feel myself allured by its charms, and when I see so many of my poor dying neighbours engrossed exclusively in these sublunary scenes, I feel that we have a mean and poor employment. And I have chosen this text, rather than many a one, which, on some accounts, would have been more appropriate, because I wish to warn myself, and the neighbourhood in which I live, and the people to whom I minister, and every stranger who may be present, that this world is not our home, nor our rest, that there awaits us a dying bed, and a lonely grave, and perhaps a sudden transit into the presence of the holy and heart-searching God. We are forming a character for another state, and have forgotten our only errand into life, if any other cares crowd us so closely, or engross us so exclusively, as the one care of adorning the

soul for its speedy appearance at the banquet of the Lamb. This is *the* concern that should direct our dreams, wake our slumbers, bring us early to our knees, and go with us and keep its hold upon our thoughts, our affections, and our lips, through all the hours of light, through the social converse of our evenings, and the sacred worship of our Sabbaths. Why can we not move about among the cares of this life, and still keep firmly our hold upon a better.

If we think often of death we shall die no sooner, and if we often talk of the life to come, we shall be called none the sooner to part with the life that now is. If we mingle the cares of another world with those of the present, we need not neglect to make all necessary provision for the body. Nor need these thoughts and cares embitter our present enjoyments. Who has heaven's permission to be happy but the believer, the man whose heavenly mind can see a substance, and taste a sweetness in the things unseen, who can even here inhale a fragrance from the flowers of paradise, and realize a treasure deposited where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal! Tell me not of men being happy whose all is in the present life, and who are tormented if they chance to think of death; it is all false. They may be stupid, and so is a worm, but who ever dreamed that a thoughtless man was happy? He may be free from sensible misery, snd so is the ox, but one who claims that he is a man, and glories in being capable of thought, is not happy when he does not think. Cast forward the eye of faith and read the future pages of your history, and if you cannot read them and still be happy, then I would bid joy adieu for ever. Think of a death-bed, of the shroud you shall wear, the coffin that shall house you, the grave

you shall occupy, the procession that shall escort you to the bleak and cheerless cemetery, the vacuum that shall be seen in your dwelling, the widow that shall weep for you, and the children that shall bury their best hopes in your sepulchre, and return to weep over their untimely orphanage:—think, too, where you shall then be, in what world, in what society, how employed—and if you cannot think it all over and be happy, your condition is most pitiable. What! do you boast of having the powers of thought, and dare not think! Glad that you are not a thoughtless beast, and yet must become thoughtless as a beast, or be miserable! Then your fancied distinctions are all a dream, and can do you no honour. My intention is to turn your minds upon the scene of death, and by this means to try your religion, and my own. If we can converse with the scenes of death and be happy, it will be one small evidence in our favour. True wisdom will lead us to consider our latter end. *I shall notice some circumstances of our latter end which it becomes us to consider, and then show that to consider these things is to act wisely.*

I am to notice some circumstances of our latter end, which it becomes us to consider.

I. Death will part asunder the body and the soul. They are dear and affectionate companions, and are to each other a source of pleasure and of pain. There is between them an indescribable power of endearing sympathy. But in death they part. The body, cold and inanimate, is thrown upon the care of men, while the spirit returns to God who gave it. What remains with us is the merest clay, while that which we loved and caressed is gone. That lifeless body is not the son, the husband, the father, the neighbour, and the friend, we loved. But it is all that we could ever see or touch, while

that essential and immortal part which has fled, was untangible and invisible. This change you and I must soon pass. This body must moulder, and this spirit be summoned away, to appear in the presence of its judge.

To properly consider this matter is to see to it that the body and the soul while they continue associates, be mutual helpmates to each other. The indulgence of the appetites and passions must not be permitted to ruin the soul, nor the mind be employed to destroy the body. They are to to be reunited in the resurrection, and must be forever happy or wretched together. Hence let the soul, while the present union continues, be purified by the blood of sprinkling, and the body rendered a meet temple for the Holy Ghost, that thus the kindred parts may exert upon each other, a mutually kind and purifying influence. Then after the sleep of the grave, there may be a union more happy than the first, more indissoluble and eternal.

2. Death will dissolve all our earthly ties. The various and endearing relationships of life are all temporary. The husband and the wife, whose union is the most endearing of all others, are obligated to love and cherish each other only till death. Then the tie is broken, and the obligation discharged. The lifeless corpse is no longer a husband, a father, a neighbour, a friend. That essential part, on whose account the relationship was formed, has fled. And "in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are" in this respect, "as the angels of God in heaven."

To give this subject its proper consideration, requires that we so discharge the various obligations that result from these relationships, as to meet their grand and heavenly design. The husband and the wife should endeavour to promote each other's sanctification, should

exert all the influence that the endearing relationship generates, to produce in each other an entire conformity to God, and thus prepare each other to be happy in the circle of the blessed. The few days that we can do each other good, urges to the utmost despatch in every benevolent design. Parents should admonish and pray for their poor dying children, from whom, in a few days, they must be torn forever, and children be a blessing to their parents while they are within reach of their kindness. The brother and sister sustain that relationship but for a few days, and must do each other all the good they ever do, very soon. The source then that genuine love will pursue is very plain. While my friends are within my reach, I should be their enemy did I not endeavour to promote their salvation, and thus do them everlasting good.

Alas, how many pursue a course precisely the opposite, and are doing all in their power to carry their friends with them down to perdition. How many husbands exert their influence to prevent the piety, and hinder the prayers, and retard the spiritual improvement of their bosom friend! And how many wives with the same treacherous kindness allure their husbands to the ways of death! Many a parent, a son, a brother, deaf themselves to the voice of mercy, are staining their hands and their garment in the blood of their kindred. And beyond a doubt the great day will hear many a curse proceed from the lips of the lost, upon their now, nearest, dearest, kindred!—On this dreadful subject I can only say, do good, and avoid doing evil, to those who are now related to you, as all their kindred ties will soon be dissolved, and these opportunities pass away forever. We shall doubtless witness against each other in the great day, and it must grieve us, if we feel tenderly, to apprehend that our own

lips may bear against beloved friends that testimony on which their condemnation may be founded.

3. Death will strip us of all our titles, and of that office, power, and influence which they imply. The magistrate, the judge, the general, and the juror, will yield his office with his life, and with it his power and his influence. The minister of the gospel, and every officer in the Christian church, or teacher in our seats of science, or the Sabbath school, must yield his place to some successor.

To properly consider this matter is to fill the office we sustain with purity and activity. If it gives us influence, there is nothing for which we are more accountable; no talent which we can use now to better advantage. If there is a soul brought by such means within our reach, and we can bless that soul, our duty is plain; and our fearful responsibility incalculable. When by any means the providence of God enlarges our sphere of action, widens the field of our labour, or strengthens the arms of our hands, his creatures are to receive the benefit, and his name is to have the praise.

What a fearful account will many have to give, when they shall be put out of their stewardship! How have they filled offices, that they might create misery, and exerted an influence in widening and vexing the horrors of the apostacy. You might almost track them by the blood they spilt, or, to drop the figure, by the vices to which they gave an impulse, by the characters they polluted, by the poverty and the tears they generated, and by a long train of untold miseries that still line their track. "Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I

say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Thus the office we fill may be suddenly vacated, and the account rendered cover us with everlasting shame.

4. Death will level all distinctions. The king and the peasant will sleep together in the grave, the master and the servant, the man of science and distinction with the untaught and the vulgar. The family who can hardly speak with patience of their unpolished neighbours, and look with contempt upon their rude and illiterate servants, must become a supper for the worm, and must scent as odiously, and rot as rapidly, and perhaps be forgotten about as soon as the innocent objects of their affected disgust. There may be a more splendid funeral. We may hear at the mouth of the tomb a more laboured and lying panegyric; and there may be erected a more splendid and perhaps a more lasting monument. But a few years will dissolve that monument, will deface its pompous inscription. and the bones it covers will appear as unsightly as any skeleton within the enclosures of the cemetery.

To properly consider this fact, is to remember that it was God who elevated us, and that views us as none the more worthy because of the distinction he has assigned us. It is our wisdom to be humble and mindful of death. Let us show the world that in our own eyes we are small; that we can enter the cottage of the peasant familiarly;

can join him, if occasion require, in his coarse and homely meal; can cheerfully bow with him at the throne of grace; mingle our counsels and our tears, insensible of any distinction for which we deserve respect, that we are not willing to bestow. We are forbidden to be wise in our own conceits, and are exhorted to condescend to men of low estate. One distinction only will outlive the ravages of death—that distinction is holiness. In the sight of God all others are temporary and worthless; and if not counteracted by the humility of the gospel, will cover us with a deeper contempt, and subject us to a more degraded infamy in the bottomless pit.

5. Death will strip us of our earthly possessions. The lifeless corpse is not the owner of a farm, or the proprietor of a bond. He cannot even defend from the attack of the ruffian the little spot of earth that contains his ashes, and his bones. The hour that strips him of life renders him as poor as at the hour of his birth, and as dependent for the shroud, as, originally, for the swathing-band.

To properly consider this matter is, to use our wealth for the honour of God, and in lessening the miseries of the apostacy. We may employ it to support and spread his gospel, to disseminate his word, to feed his poor. Some object of benevolent regard is forever at our door, some good devised that we may execute, some cause labouring that we may lend our aid. We may have high ideas of our own rights, but we are all the Lord's stewards. He has commanded us to occupy till he come. We must very soon go out of office, and must then give an account of our stewardship, and happy for us if we have made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive us into everlasting habitations. But how many, when they shall be called to

yield their interest will find that their gold and silver is corrupted, and their garments moth eaten. If they have done any good with their wealth, it was by the merest accident: they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so, and they are seen to repent of all the good they have done, and of nothing else. They have fixed a dying hold upon their farms and their merchandises, and the day that breaks that hold will be of all other days the most wretched. They have forgotten their latter end, and can be waked from the charm only by that stroke that sunders them from life.

6. As a distinct thought, I would suggest that death must bring all our schemes to a close. There is in some men a proneness to cast their thoughts ahead, and so interweave their projects, that it would seem they can never find leisure to lie down and sleep in the grave. They never calculate upon closing their concerns. There is scarce a moment, from the beginning of the year till it ends, that finds them sufficiently at leisure to worship God without distraction. Some scheme is in its embryo, and some other unfinished. And, finally, many a one is but partially executed, when death throws in its arbitrary and fearful arrest. Then there must be a pause: the jaded spirit must rest, and the body retires with it. Cheerful or reluctant the world must quit its hold, and the stream of thought chill in its channel.

And this event expected should teach us to limit our views, and to moderate our hopes and wishes. It would be wise to calculate that somewhere not very distant from us, there is opened a grave athwart our track, where we must stop and rest, and beyond which, if we extend our schemes, they but die on our hands, or remain for others to finish. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we hasten.'

And perhaps nothing would so tend to make us lower our hopes, and limit our worldly calculation, as to place the solemnities of our own funeral at but a few months remove from us. If we place it too near no evil could follow; while, if too remotely, a train of disappointments and miseries follow, the weight of which it will take a whole eternity to calculate.

7. Death will finish our period of *usefulness*. "It is that night when no man can work." All the good we ever do must be soon done, or is left undone forever. All the good counsel we ever give, all the prayers we ever make, all the miseries we ever relieve; all the progress we shall ever make in the pursuit of truth, and all the honour we shall ever do to God, must be done soon. And it seems to me that no thought is so calculated to wake us to industry. "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might," is the very inference to be drawn from the shortness of time. If any man is a knave, it is he who is willing to die before he has been useful, who is willing to feed upon the bounties of heaven, to gather about him the fruits of the earth, and lavish them upon his own indolence, and leave God to publish his own praise by other instruments. Our obligation to do good is as unalienable as the authority of God is binding, or the fear of misery appalling, or the hope of glory inviting. Have we then done all the good we have purposed to do? Have we no dying friends to whom we would communicate instruction or comfort before they leave us? Is there no object of charity to which conscience may have given some pledge not yet redeemed? By the sure and speedy approach of death, we are admonished to haste and finish our work, lest we should leave it for others to neglect as we have.

8. Death will finish our *character*, and close our ac-

counts for the judgment. We are probationers for another state, and our character here will decide our condition there. It is believed that life will furnish the materials on which the judgment will proceed, the varied tests of our character, and the reasons of our acquittal or our condemnation. The thoughts and volitions of the dying bed will constitute the closing items of that fearful account which we must render to the judge of all.

To give this thought its due importance, we should often examine our state, and inquire if we are ready to be judged. Is the Lord Jesus Christ formed in us the hope of glory? Shall we appear, if we quit the world this evening, clothed in his righteousness? Else no works of ours will avail to procure our acceptance, and ruin is as certain as the judgment.

Haste, then, if you would be esteemed wise, and set your house in order, against the hour of your dissolution. Mortify the deeds of the body, wake the mind to industry, and rouse the heart and the conscience to energy of feeling and action in the work of grace. Collect your friends about you, and make one more effort to do them good before every tie that binds them to you is sundered. Fill the office assigned you with fidelity, and use your influence to promote the honour of your Redeemer. Cultivate a meek and lowly mind, be familiar with your own worthlessness; use your wealth for the honour of God, and in doing good to a miserable world. Limit your prospects by the grave: have your work done; your character formed for heaven; your sins forgiven; and your pollution covered with a Saviour's blood. Then death will not surprise you, and the grave will become your refuge and your friend.

II. To properly consider the circumstances of our latter end is to act wisely. If while we proceed, worldly

men, whose every interest is in this world, should draw the inference that they are acting unwisely, and playing the fool with their own best good; this is precisely the effect we always wish to produce, and shall rejoice to find that they can reason so well on a subject of such amazing importance. Under every sermon men ought to be convinced that they are acting a mad and desperate part, while they neglect all the hopes of the life to come, and deposit all their treasures on the surface of this perishing world. The man who should place all his fortune in a burning building, or embark with his whole interest in a sinking ship, would not act more unwisely. I remark,

1. That God has pronounced it wise to consider our latter end, and act with constant and careful reference to the life to come. This is precisely the sentiment of the text, and of many other scriptures which pour their light upon the same truth. "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness." Said the Lord to Israel, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." How often is it said of the wicked, that although they were warned they would not be wise. "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they

would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

I know that we are forbidden to be anxious for the things of to-morrow, but this text, instead of teaching the contrary, teaches the same doctrine. We are not to be anxious for the things of this life, which we may need for our support to-morrow. We are to be "anxious, not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life." We are so to use the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we are put out of our stewardship, we may have a friend who may receive us into everlasting habitations.

Thus God himself, who cannot be mistaken, has declared it wise to look well to our future prospects, and "lay up in store against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life."

2. The wisdom of such a course is inferred from the fact, that in all other things we consider it indispensable. If we have in view any worldly enterprise, we, as far as possible, anticipate the concern in all its bearings, and weigh, before we meet them, every embarrassment and every obstacle, that may be at war with our purpose, We bring before us the darker side of the picture, as well as the brighter, contemplate every passion, and every interest with which we may come in contact, and press the eye of the mind forward to meet every feature of the probable result. Is one about to leave the place of his nativity, he does not move, if he is wise, till he has carefully surveyed the country toward which he bends his

wishes and his hopes, counts the cost of his intended enterprise, weighs the probable advantages of the removal, and is prepared to meet, without surprise, every failure that can lie within the reach of probability. Thus worldly men constantly manage the concerns of this life, and the Scriptures assure us, that they are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Would we pursue the same measures relative to the life to come, God would approve. It would be a source of conduct becoming a wise and thinking man. We should then look forward and survey all the circumstances of our departure from this world, the state of our hearts, the probability of our composure, and our acceptance in the hour of death, the ties that must then be broken, the titles that must then be lost, the office that must then be resigned, the distinctions that must then be levelled, the possessions that must be relinquished, the exertions that must terminate, and the pause that must ensue to all our schemes. We should live with the whole scene before us, and often summon the mind to bear, with all its native energies, upon that most interesting epoch of our history. I knew a man, who, for years, kept his coffin in his chamber, often placed himself in the narrow house, and often contemplated the scenes of his interment, and thus kept himself familiar with the hour of his dissolution. Now should we not, without resorting to such means, practice the same forethought, and thus, if possible, have the terror of death broken, before we are called to the last and desperate contest. What argument can be offered why this concern should not be the subject of meditation, rather, far rather, than the erection of a dwelling, or a removal to some distant country. The wise, who go out to meet the bridegroom, will be careful,

not only that their lamps are burning, but that there is oil in their vessels with their lamps.

3. To make death a matter of previous calculation, is necessary to the promotion of our temporal interest, and that of our heirs. If one may die before his plans are executed, and is strongly impressed with this truth, he will conceive none but such as another can carry into operation. This would be the dictate of wisdom. He will hold his concerns in such a state of order and arrangement, that he can, at a moment's warning, hand over his records and his wealth, to be managed and enjoyed with the smallest possible embarrassment. And such a state of things has always been considered favourable to present interest. And can any thought be so calculated to further this arrangement as the strong impression of a speedy and sudden departure. Let a man keep his concerns in such a state that if death arrest his course, nothing is deranged, nothing obscure, nothing neglected, and he will be the man whom no minor event can distract or destroy. If, then, we would make our calculations merely for the present life, to often contemplate the scenes of death, would further, unspeakably, this one interest. But some may feel that this is an engagement too sordid to have weight on a point so momentous.

I observe, then,

4. That to well consider our latter end will tend to forward our preparation for the scenes of death. We all, in a sense, know that we must die; but this truth makes so little impression, ordinarily, that we may be said to doubt it. Young says, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." Should a stranger from some world where they never die, glance his eye upon this, he would not have the most distant concep-

tion, that we had any fear of such a change. He would see us so managing our concerns, as if we calculated to be the perpetual proprietors of the soil we cultivate, the merchandise we handle, and the dwellings we occupy.

In this state of things the thoughts of death are excluded, and consequently all preparation for that hour is deferred. We have too many cares to give death, and hell, and heaven, and the judgment, any permanent lodgement in the mind, and too many sublunary affections to leave room in the heart for more sublime attachments. The course, then, that wisdom would dictate is plain. Let the mind be emptied of its cares, and let the heart dismiss some of its beloved objects; that they may be better employed in pondering the scenes, and fixing a grasp upon the objects of a better life. Thus we should be drawn nearer to the scenes of eternity, should feel that its interests demanded our care, and should be led to speed our preparation for a dying hour. We are thus urged to the subject, by all that heaven is worth, by all that is shocking in a hopeless death-bed, and by all that is black, and dark, and dreadful, in the untold horrors of the second death. If we hold an unbroken grasp upon the present life, and the present world, till we have come to the precincts of another, it must not surprise us, if our dying lips are heard to utter this melancholy outcry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." We may have our heaven here if we can stumble upon such a wretched choice, but then, all beyond is hell; or we may deposit our treasure in heaven, and in that case gather many of its comforts on our way thither.

5. Wise men have always thought much on the subject of death. Read the history of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and how often do we see them,

as it were, wandering amid the scenes of the tomb. They contemplated the event of death, as worthy to occupy a prominent place in every scheme of life, prepared themselves a sepulchre, and gave commandment concerning their bones, with the same calmness as when they thought of other events. Solomon and David seemed to feel themselves nobly employed in describing the scenes of the dying hour. Locke and Newton, men of the noblest genius, esteemed the present world as but their temporary residence. And if the frequent contemplation of a great subject is evidence of a great mind, men may not hope to evince their wisdom by dismissing the subject of death, and the grave. Compared with these, all other subjects are small and mean. Am I to drop this body, and enter an unknown world, and find a far different state and different employ; these are great and grand ideas, that deserve all the strength of the mind, and all the energy of the heart in their slow and prayerful contemplation. Does death finish my character, and fix my destiny, and place me unalterably in paradise or perdition; I have not a care so worthy to occupy my intellect, nor a scene in contemplation on which I so much hang my hopes, and about which cluster affections so worthy the dignity of my immortal nature. "O that they were wise." You have known cases, when men, occupying the same prison, were under the same sentence of death. You entered their apartment on the morning of their execution. One was sporting in his chains, as indifferent to the scene before him as if no crime had been committed, and no judgment had been given. You was ready to presume, that he did not know that his last day had come, and, when undeceived on this point, did you not, instinctively, pronounce him a fool? His fellow sat solitary in the corner

of his cell, casting his eye along the page of inspiration, and when he saw you he fixed upon you a look of wishfulness and of agony, and exclaimed, "This is my last day!" Did he not then exhibit a dignity that commanded your tearful respect? The one intended to postpone the cares of death till he perished, the other pondered the scene as it approached, and when the last day had come, could think of nothing else. From the one you turned with disgust, the other you honoured. Yes, and we have the same impression, when we meet with men of these opposite characters in the streets, that you had when you entered the precints of that dungeon. The one will not speak nor permit us to speak of any world but this; the other gladly accompanies us to the death-bed and the judgment. The one we honour, and the other we pity. We know that both are condemned by the law of God, and that both must die, and be judged, and have their state unalterably fixed, and live in glory forever, or lie down in "shame and everlasting contempt." We feel that it would be wise in them to lay these things to heart, and speak of them as amazing realities, and they sink in our estimation if we see them reluctant to cast a look beyond the sepulchre.

REMARKS.

1. Men are sometimes afraid to think of death, presuming that such thoughts are a prelude to its approach. I believe it is often impressed upon their minds, that to converse with the scene would absolutely urge on their dissolution. But we shall die none the sooner, if we often contemplate the solemnities of our departure. Nor will death stay his progress if we push from us all thoughts of his advance. In the counsels of heaven there is an

appointed time when we shall receive our arrest, and the places that know us shall know us no more. Why then be afraid to meet the thoughts of futurity, and to converse with the grave. We have a preparation to make. If nothing is yet done, *then* no other subject should engross the mind till something is. Will a wise man cultivate his fields, till he has made some effort to have his heart fruitful in the affections of the gospel? Will he be careful for an estate, till he has laid up his treasure in heaven? Will he adjust his accounts with men, and feel no concern to settle the quarrel, and have the debt cancelled, that stands against him on the records of his Maker? Will he regard the esteem of men, and make no effort to wipe from his character the almost indelible stigma which sin has stamped upon his moral reputation? There is no other concern worth your care if God is your enemy. Be this the first, and be this the only care, till that tremendous controversy is happily adjusted.

2. Sometimes men are afraid to think of death, because they know that they are not prepared. They are scared at their own condition. I recollect to have seen it stated, that much of the city of Paris is undermined by a quarry, now improved as a cemetery, where moulder the ashes and the bones of its former gay and thoughtless population. Fears have been entertained that it might one day sink into that deep and fearful sepulchre. A slight shock of an earthquake might be sufficient to break the deceitful incrustation *upon* which they revel, and *under* which they are destined to rot. Lest any should take alarm at their frightful situation, I am told, there is a law of the city forbidding its inhabitants to explore the vault that yawns beneath them. Thus sin-

ners covet the calm that arises from ignorance of their true condition. But blinded as they may keep themselves to their real danger, their condition remains the same, and the pit which they may industriously cover still waits to receive them. One would think it more wise to endeavour to know the worst of their case, and if on an impartial survey it shall appear desperate, aim to secure, while it is possible, their future safety and blessedness. But be the danger of delay more or less imminent, they still covet a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep. If the result of their delay is perdition, all this danger they intend to risk.

3. Others perhaps refuse to consider their latter end because *conscience would then urge them to fly from the wrath to come, and render them unhappy*, if they still urged their way to death. Having by some means or other come to the monstrous conclusion, that religion would render them miserable, they have barred their minds and their hearts against all its claims. Hence every argument, and every thought that may suggest an argument, and every object that may awaken such a thought, are barred from every possible approach to the mind. In this condition no meditations are so painful, as those by which the mind approaches the unseen world, and gently lifts the curtain that hides futurity. If men should act so madly in their worldly concerns, they would merit a cage, a chain, or a guardian. They fly from their best friends, abandon their highest interests, and linger on the shores of death from the impression that to live forever would render them wretched.

4. To all but those who reject a Saviour, the meditations of death and the grave are pleasant. Here is a period to all their pains, their toils, their fears, and their doubts.

In death they drop this dying body, and leave in the grave the last relics of corruption. All beyond is life, and joy, and immortality. There, for the first time, the good man will have that view of Christ which he has always longed to enjoy, and be himself what he has always wished to be. Hence the good man often finds the pulse of his joy quickened by conversing with the grave. To him it appears closely connected with the life and the joys to come. Where the sinner finds nothing but corruption and misery, he gathers hope, and joy, and life. To him, to live is Christ, but to die is gain. How delightful when we can thus think of death, divested of its sting, and of the grave as a kind covert from the storm, a shelter and a home for the way-worn pilgrim.

APPLICATION.

I have called your attention, my dear friends, to this subject, because I know not how soon you or I may yield this transitory life. A few past weeks have made, in many of your families, deep and fearful ravages. God is speaking to us by these events, and the text is the very language they utter. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." If God is heard when he speaks, it is well; and if not, he will speak again and again. Have we resolved to turn our feet to his testimonies? Will professors of piety closely examine their hearts and their lives, and inquire whether they have been born of God, and are bringing forth fruit meet for repentance? May we see prayer in all their families, and piety in their daily conversations? Will those who have no hope that their state has been altered relax a little their care of the life that now is, and give themselves leisure to attend to the things that belong to their peace, before it be hidden

from their eyes? Will parents determine to go home, and set their house in order, and prepare to leave their families and their estates forever? May we hope that the close contemplation of the grave, to which we are invited, may urge us all to cleanse our consciences from guilt, to application to God for pardon, and make confession and restitution wherein we have wronged or abused our fellow-men. It will be dreadful to come to the death-bed with a conscience burdened with sin, and feel in that painful hour the miseries of self-condemnation We all have a conscience, and never is it so likely to gnaw and devour as when some sudden attack of disease shuts us out from all intercourse with the world. Then, if our miseries do not forbid, the busy mind will retrace our past life, and perhaps bring upon that hour the compunction which it should now be our wish to feel, and the anguish which then we shall not know how to endure.

Is our peace made with God? Are we making that use of the gospel which was heaven's design in its publishment? Are we becoming sanctified through the truth? Or is the gospel more likely to be a savor of death unto death to us, than of life unto life? Are there any of our youth who are beginning to inquire after a Saviour and a pardon? May we hope that believers are feeling as they should do relative to those who are perishing around them? Are they staying the hands of their pastor, and pouring into the ears of their Redeemer that effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous, which availeth much. I have hoped, and so have others, that God was about to pour us out a blessing. True, there stand some frightful apprehension in the way of such a blessing. But God, if he ever returns and leaves a blessing behind him, must receive us before

we are worthy. There never will be that moment when he will not see enough in us to provoke him rather to destroy us than to save us. Hence our only hope is that he will have mercy upon us, according to his loving kindness, and according unto the multitude of his tender mercies.

SERMON LIV.

THE DESPERATE EFFORT.

Matthew, xi. 12.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

I REMEMBER to have been very much affected with a scrap of civil story which I met with in the history of the Greeks' escape from the iron bondage of their Turkish oppressors. After being robbed and plundered some hundreds of years, they at length attempted to escape. The enemy had, for some months, closely besieged Missolonghi, and the Grecian band had concluded to surrender; but as there was nothing for them but servitude, or death, they finally concluded not to be *taken*, but to rush into the fort at the desperate moment, and blow themselves up. Their purpose fixed, and the light of Greece about to be extinguished forever, there was one young man who, with his sister, concluded to watch the favoured moment, and rush out of the fort, and sell their lives as dear as possible, and make their attack where the ranks of the foe were the thinnest. They did so; and the sister being mounted upon a mule, fought side by side with her brother, and both were so inspired by their desperation that they hewed themselves a passage, and made their escape, and lived to tell the

story. Their settled purpose was to die, sword in hand, or spill all the Turkish blood they might, and live.

Thus men must determine to put forth, in the effort to reach heaven, all the energy they can muster, and if they do this, they shall live. I suppose this to be the very spirit of the text, which reads in the original, "Agonize to enter in at the strait gate."

I was similarly affected by a narrative of the escape of a post-man, who, for a very large reward, attempted to carry a letter across one of the deep glens of Scotland, through an overwhelming north-east storm. He had been, if I remember right, a shepherd, and fearlessly set out on the enterprise, while many were filled with apprehension for his life, if the storm did not subside. The weather was excessively cold, and the violence of the storm rendered it impossible to see any track of man or beast, through the whole glen. The only chance of a safe arrival consisted of some knowledge he had of the ground, where he had many a time driven his flocks in summer. But, as he afterward assured us, one may have a very accurate knowledge of the way in summer, while, in a winter storm of snow, at night, the whole way seems like a trackless ocean. It is said that some of those glens in Scotland are so full of snow in winter as not to thaw out in midsummer.

His courage, as the storm thickened, and the cold increased, would have failed, but at length it became as doubtful whether he could find the way back, as whether he should succeed in crossing the mountain ridge in safety. As he had to cross many a small stream, now filled with snow, he not unfrequently sunk, and wet his feet in the stream, and on bringing them up again to the cold air, they froze, and at length became

so disabled that he could rise on his feet no more, and he had to press forward on his knees, as well as he could. From some indications, he concluded, that he had well nigh crossed the glen, and might, by lifting up his voice, be heard. He cried aloud for help—*a lost traveller!*—but cried in vain. At length he became frozen to his knees, and he could only worm himself onward with his hands, for he knew that when he should cease all exertion, he must immediately die, and there was a possibility that his cry might be heard, and he should live. Hence he raised again and again his cry, *a lost traveller!* But at length, a little opening of the storm showed a shepherd's cot at hand. He had not missed his way to the cottage of a shepherd which he sought, and easily wormed himself to his very door, and gave the signal that saved his life. His friend opened to him and built a fire, and warmed him into recollection and recovery.

But if that man had not persevered after he had frozen his feet, and even after he could no longer travel on his lower limbs, but had to worm his way on his elbows, he must have died. Although he was near the shepherd's cot, yet as he did not know his position, if his resolution had failed for a moment, and exertion had ceased, he must have died. He agonized to live, and his agonizing saved him. And if we will only thus agonize to live *forever*, we *shall live forever*.

There is not an enterprise we undertake that requires so much exertion as to reach heaven. Those who conclude that they know enough of the subject already, and that heaven will come as a thing of course, and fold their arms and slumber on, will die in their sins, and never see the King in his beauty. The few years of their probation will slip by before they are aware, and

they will just begin to feel the importance of doing something, when they shall find themselves upon a dying bed, the harvest past, the summer ended, and they unsanctified. The divine direction is, "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate," *agonize* to enter *in*. There is here no tameness, nor waiting, nor listlessness, nor indifference. We are to put on the whole armor of God, and force our way to heaven, as men cut themselves a path by dint of prowess, through the ranks of the enemy, and make their escape, when there seems nothing before them but death. Who can you expect to be concerned for your salvation, if you care not for it yourself? Who will agonize for your cleansing, and your pardon, and your acceptance, if *you* care for none of these things? If *God* ever interpose in your behalf, the first thing he will do will be to awaken you to the concerns of your own soul. If you are not now awakened, it is certain you are still in the broad way to destruction. Let me offer a few *reasons why you should try to be saved.*

1. *You cannot expect to be saved without trying.* "The kingdom of heaven," says Christ, "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force:" implying, as all agree, that if we would be saved, we must make great exertion.

If we would get to heaven there is a great deal of *truth* that we must know and believe. We must be acquainted with the character of God that we may love him; with the character, offices, and work of Jesus Christ, that we may trust in him; with the nature and operations of the Holy Ghost, that we may feel his sanctifying influence. We must be acquainted with our hearts, or we shall never see the need of their being purified; and with all the great doctrines of the gospel, or there will be no medium of our cleansing. "Sanctify

them through thy truth." We must know the Scripture account of heaven, or we cannot wish to be there; and to learn all this truth will require great exertion.

We have a great many *sins* to subdue, and must calculate to wrestle hard for the mastery. Neither pride, nor envy, nor anger, nor vanity, nor ambition, nor lust, nor selfishness, can enter heaven. We must put off all these: "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouth." These vile affections must all have been subdued when we reach heaven. The warfare is no mean one. And more yet: "we wrestle not againt flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We must fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

Nor can we enter *heaven* unless we have all the features of the divine image: we must "add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity." We must be familiar with the exercises of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." We must "forget those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Now, all this implies great exertion, which, if we do not make, we cannot reach the kingdom of God.

2. Striving to be saved, you have *the most kind assurance of success.* The obstructions to your salvation are all removed, on God's part, by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God can now be "just, and the justifier of him that believeth." "Mercy and truth are met together,

righteousness and peace embrace each other." If you seek wisdom "as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure," you shall "understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." "He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And hence the kind invitation, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon."

Sinner, as God is true, who has given all these assurances and promises, it will be your own fault if you are not saved; and you will have, to torment you in the future world, the consciousness that you chose darkness rather than light, because your deeds were evil. You might have lived in heaven, had you not despised the mercy offered you, and counted yourself unworthy of everlasting life. When was it ever known that a sinner made any suitable exertions to be saved, and still was lost? Among all their unreasonable complaints of perdition, none ever had occasion to say, "I went to the Saviour, at his invitation, and believed the promises, and had assurances of pardon, and hope of heaven, and yet am lost!" No! not one of the spirits in prison can have any such alleviation of his torment as the thought that he perished through the failure of a Saviour's promise. Why then will you not be saved? God will glorify himself by you, either in your destruction or salvation, and he commands you to choose life. But you must choose now—"now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." If you will not believe, the sin and the ruin will your own.

3. You should try to be saved, because, with a heav-

enly temper, *you can be more useful in life.* How much can you do to induce men to respect the name of God, and obey his law, and honour his government, and keep his Sabbaths, and revere his sanctuary, and obey his gospel. You can set an example to men of all the duties of piety, and induce others, by your godly conversation, to glorify your Father in heaven, and thus become a light of the world. You can help to strengthen Christian affection, and bind into a still closer and lovelier union the members of the body of Christ. You can aid their joy, and promote their sanctification and their usefulness. You can set an example of the moral virtues, and by your conduct and precepts, elevate public sentiment, till a great amount of the misery that falls to the lot of sinners around you shall be cured or alleviated. And when saved yourself, you can, by God's blessing, induce other sinners to fly for refuge, and lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. But none of this can it be hoped you will do, till you are saved yourself.

4. You should try to be saved, *because you could be so useful in heaven.* God has given you a mind, and if not now the most brilliant, it might perhaps be such in heaven. The rough block of marble may embosom the most beautiful specimens of polished and useful workmanship. Your mind, could it once be placed in the school of Christ, and afterward in heaven, might claim, for aught you know, a blessed elevation among its ransomed choirs. Unclog it, and none can say but it may yet vie with angelic powers. And God might then employ it, we know not how, in the loftiest enterprise. We do not believe that heaven will be a place of idleness. Some new anthem may perpetually elicit more delight through all the heavenly courts. Some new means of doing good

to that world, or this, or some other, may from time to time arrest the attention of angels, and secure the co-operation of all the holy assembly. Such, we may suppose, was the visit of Gabriel to Daniel; and such the song of angels, heard by the watchful shepherds, at the birth of Christ. None can say that the Redeemer may not employ in administering the government of this world, the very beings he has redeemed from it with his blood. O sinner! we regret that you should be lost, for we know not how *useful* you might be in heaven.

5. You should try to be saved also, because you could be *so happy in heaven*. Even in this poor world there is enjoyment. How much greater will be our bliss in heaven, where all obstructions to our happiness will be removed. There will be no unhallowed passions to be excited. No pain will there arise from anger, wrath, malice, envy, ambition, covetousness, pride, vanity, lust, jealousy, or revenge. There will be no natural body to hunger, thirst, faint, and tire; to suffer pain from frost, or heat, or famine, or pestilence, or wound, or bruise, or mutilation, or death. There will be no foe to hurt your character, your interest, your feelings, or your person; no rival to hate, or inferior to despise. There will be in heaven no sun to scorch, or storm to destroy, or moon or sun to be eclipsed, or sky to be clouded. Suppose all this, and how much of life's misery is gone.

Add now to the removal of these obstructions every positive good that an Almighty God can bestow; a mind fully illuminated, a heart the seat of every kind and holy affection, a conscience exonerated from guilt, an imagination unlimited in its power of conception, a judgment that can never err. Let there be presented to the admiring view all that is lovely, all that can be included

in the golden city, the rivers, and the tree of life, the banquet of the Lamb, "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," the everlasting song, the uninterrupted rest, and the society forever of holy men and holy angels. All this would render you so happy, that we cannot endure the thought of your being lost. Try then to be saved, that you may be happy in heaven.

6. *What others have done for your salvation* should induce you to try to be saved. The plan for your redemption was laid in heaven. To accomplish it, the Son of God became incarnate, lived a life of sorrow, and died on the cross, and now ever lives to make intercession for you. How much he must have cared for your soul! In the achievement of the same plan of mercy, the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to awaken and sanctify you. He has often strove with you, has produced alarm in your conscience, and perhaps deep conviction; has given the truth sometimes a fixed lodgement by the side of your heart. Thus has he evinced his readiness to save you. And his ministers, too, have long and earnestly pleaded with you. In many a sermon, unless you have absented yourself from the house of God, they have pleaded with you to "flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on everlasting life." And they have sometimes felt an agony for your soul, that, it would seem, could not be denied. They have prayed for you many a time in the midnight hour, and then have come from their closets and wept over you—and all, it seems, to no purpose.

It may be that a pious parent has long cared for your soul. Through the fear that you would be lost, that faithful friend may have wished many a time that you had never been born. O! could you have known the

anxiety and the agony of that parent, while watching over the slumbers of your cradle, then you would try to be saved.

And it may be that a pious brother, or sister, or wife, is at this moment pleading at the throne of grace for your salvation. And will you not then care for yourself, and try to be saved? All this care for you—and you none for yourself!

7. You should try to be saved, because you must be *infinitely degraded in hell.* You are to remember, that you were made a little lower than the angels; that you have a nature capable of being elevated to a close companionship with them, and of pouring forth a praise as noble, and glowing with a love as ardent as theirs. And now to think of sinking with such a nature down to hell, of being the companion of devils, and of employing your lips in unceasing blasphemy,—how gloomy the conception! There will be, in your case, the shame of being convicted, and that before assembled worlds, and of being banished into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And your fall from the hope of heaven must be known. You must be forever congregated with the meanest of your race, the thief, the robber, the murderer, the swindler, the liar, the drunkard, and the whole mass of convicts. And your employment will be suited to the temper of your heart, and all restraint removed. Hence despair, and blasphemy, and malice, and revenge, will be the habitual and the degraded exercise of the damned.

Hell will be the grand prison of the universe, where will be collected the incorrigibly wicked, the smoke of whose torment will ascend up forever and ever, marking out the place as the most accursed spot in all the dominion of God. The *ignominy* of such an imprisonment, and

such a damnation, if there were no positive punishment inflicted, no quenchless fire, nor never-dying worm, would be more than can be endured. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?"

8. You should try to be saved, because *the most bitter reflections await you if you are not saved.* You will reflect how much was done to save you; how much the Saviour did; how much the Father did; how much the Spirit did; how much your Christian friends did—all to no purpose. You will reflect how many sermons, and prayers, and tears, and entreaties, and Sabbaths, and sacraments, and admonitions of conscience, and revival seasons, and alarming events of Providence, have spent their force upon you to no purpose, hardening you, when perhaps they might have saved you.

You will reflect how easy were the terms of salvation; that you were offered life if you would only believe; that no truth was required to be believed but that of which you had evidence, and no duty to be done but that which would have been pleasant; that your life, if you had believed, would have been more happy, your death tranquil, and your eternity glorious. You will reflect how nigh you came to the kingdom of God, and was lost. Born in a Christian land, of Christian parents, the Bible early in your hand, and you as early taught to read it, given up to God from your birth, instructed carefully in the truth, and furnished with the Sabbath, and all its holy appendages—it will seem to you, forever, that you sunk down to perdition from the very threshold of heaven.

You will reflect how many, with no more, and perhaps fewer advantages than you, have escaped to heaven. Your brother or sister, it may be, was saved, while you

were lost. Some, perhaps, your immediate friends, of wicked families, and having nothing like the advantages that you had, have reached heaven, while you have been lost. Shall these bitter reflections prey upon you like a famine, or a pestilence, forever? Will you not try to be saved? "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

9. You should attempt NOW to be saved, *because the longer you postpone, the less is the probability that the attempt will ever be made.* Whatever are the reasons of the postponement, they are reasons furnished by depravity, and will, of course, increase with the growth of sin. If it be enmity to the kind and lovely Saviour, it will multiply with your years, and ripen with your age. If his eternal excellencies have never yet won your heart—if the glories that have attracted the gaze, and waked the song of angels, and been echoed in notes of victory through the caverns of death, have produced no thrill of joy in your soul, how can you hope that, as his glories shall become more brilliant, and the notes of his conquest shall wax louder and louder, your spirit will become subdued? Will it not rise in its wrath, and envenomed at length like the serpent that has plunged its fangs into its own life-stream, seal its own damnation, and lie down in fire? Wait not till heaven has raised another shout of victory; stay not till Christ has conquered the gods of China, or quelled the demons of Ham's dark empire, lest his glories should pierce your soul through with the poisoned arrows of everlasting chagrin. O wait not to have the Hero of Calvary put forth any hidden glory of his name! Devils will taunt the sinner that waits for this, and is damned. His laurels wave already over their dark empire, and their king quails at

His power, and dies anew, whenever another, and still another victory is sung.

10. Or do you postpone embracing the Saviour, because you have not yet *had your fill of sin?* Surely it has made you miserable enough. Your satiety, after a scene of pleasure, has sometimes been almost insupportable. When it threatened your *health*, or your *character*, or your *business*, to continue any longer in sin, how indescribable have been your sensations of regret! You wished you had never loved sin, or learned to sin; you wished that your parents had early restrained you; you regretted that you had ever formed an acquaintance with that man who tempted you to sin; that you had ever been in that circle whose bewitching snares have caught you and held you; that ever you visited that scene of dissipation, or went to that house of death. How horrid, to be filling up life with these regrets, and to pore unavailingly over what should be at once repented of and abandoned! How grovelling, to be howling upon your bed, when, if you would only be ingenuous enough to repent, you might be lifting up your voice in praise, and be singing on your way to the grave, songs sweet as angels use. The meanness of sin will render it impossible that the lost should have any respect for themselves, or for each other, in the world of death! How utterly vain the expectation, that there shall be in that world any thing worthy to be called *society*, or *kindness*, or *friendship!* O, it will be all a mass of *despair*, and *chagrin*, and *hatred*, and *shame;* when, if men would only be wise now, and accept the offered Saviour, all this might be exchanged for heaven, where kindred spirits might bask in everlasting sunshine through all the years of the existence of the unchanging God.

1. *Remark.*—But why does God make it so difficult

to get to heaven? Does he delight to put poor human nature upon such a painful effort with no specific design? We suppose that God has a wise and good design, and that his design may be obvious. To make such a mighty effort to reach heaven will greatly enhance the joy of being saved. O, when the effort is made, is over, and the object won, with how much joy may believers look back on all the way that God led them to his kingdom. When they shall see the wilderness all trodden over, every sin and every foe subdued, and every snare escaped, and look upon the heavenly route from the heights of Zion, they will sing the more joyfully to the honour of him who led them by a *right way*, that they might go to a city of habitation. How joyfully would that Grecian pair raise among their countrymen, the long and loud *Te Deum* to the God of armies! when there had so few escaped and yet *they* had escaped, and when they found themselves the only two who had sold their lives at any price, and they had brought life away with them in all its vigour and in all its youth, life to them would seem more lovely.

2. If we have taken joyfully the spoiling of our goods; knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, and through much tribulation have come where that treasure is, and find it ample and abiding, heaven will always seem worth more for the cost of it. We always value most what cost us most; and if heaven cost us more than every thing beside, we shall proportionally esteem it. When the whole family of the redeemed shall have vied with each other through ten thousand ages, in the effort to see which can set the highest price upon the exceeding weight of glory that shall have been poured in upon their glorified spirits, they will not have reached the price or told the value.

Its price is far above rubies. One will value that world highly, because, in competitorship with a million of his generation he out-did them all in the effort to keep fanned up the flame of holy love in his heart, which held him ready for a renewed conflict on the bed of death with that enemy who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Another and another will throw into their song of victory the joy of an exemplary youth, made so by the constant application of the Holy Ghost, which raised them above the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.

One lovely mother will sing of a reviving season, in the evening-time of life, which threw by, and passed over, the storms that had gathered about the place of her setting sun, and gave her joy in death. Thus one, and another, and another, when they shall have fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith, and have found laid up for them in heaven, a crown of life, will unite to say in one eternal chorus, *God is the King!* The one hundred and forty and four thousand that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, will grace the marriage supper, and utter in a long and loud response, "This is the Lord, we have waited for him and he will save us; this is our God! we have waited for him and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

SERMON LV.

CONCIO AD CLERUM.

II. *Timothy*, i. 8.

Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

Most other parts of Paul's instructions to Timothy, have been, at times, the foundation of address to God's ministers; *but this, to my knowledge, never.* The opinion is, that Paul wrote this epistle some twelve or fifteen years after the date of the first, near the close of life, and while a prisoner at Rome. It contains his dying advice, given in view of the assurance that his departure was at hand. Timothy was his own son in the gospel, and he expresses for him a peculiar affection, and deals out paternal advice, in a dress the most kind and amiable.

The exhortation in the text is somewhat singular. Did Timothy need to be exhorted to become a partaker in the afflictions of the gospel? Did it depend on his choice, whether he would, or would not, be a partaker in those afflictions? Was it desirable that he stand ready and willing to suffer? Was it *honourable* or *necessary* to be afflicted in the discharge of his duty, if he might escape? To all these questions the text implies an answer in the affirmative.

It is more than possible that he saw Timothy tempted to deny his father in Christ, now that he was in bonds. The enemy would tauntingly say, This is the proselyte,

and the pupil of that Paul who has gone to Rome in bonds. Hence Timothy, as Peter on a former occasion, would be in danger of saying, I know not the man. He might thus hope to escape the cross, and might fear that otherwise chains might be fastened on himself, as a man equally dangerous with his master. Hence he exhorts him as in the text.

But the exhortation is not of private interpretation, and will apply to the people of God, and especially his ministers, in this age, as readily as in any one that has gone by. In what follows I shall notice some of the afflictions of the gospel, explain the import of the exhortation, and urge upon the ministers of Jesus Christ the duty of becoming voluntary partakers in these afflictions.

I. I am to notice some of the *afflictions of the gospel.* In doing this, however, I shall rather dwell on the *causes* of these afflictions.

1. The ministers of Jesus Christ must *form* and *defend* an *unpopular character.* I am aware that efforts have been made to show that the ministers of the gospel, and the people of God generally, need have nothing about them peculiar, and I am aware, too, that many, professing godliness, have made the experiment of being, in their whole deportment, what the world are. And it cannot be denied, that they have been, in that case, greatly caressed by the world. "If ye were of the world the world would love his own." Can we but flatter as adroitly, and dress as gaily, and joke as familiarly, and laugh as loudly, as the most thoughtless of the multitude, they will cease their complaints. With the minister of the gospel who can shine in the party, and advocate the dance, and make the game innocent, and the theatre chaste, and every other vain amusement harmless, the world will have no quarrel. Not the most

profane, or proud, or gay, or voluptuous, will have any fault to find with *him*, when he ceases to reproach *them*. Let him in company keep back the subject that would give offence, and suppress the dissent that would be unwelcome, and bless whom the world blesses, and rebuke whom they abominate, and the world will pronounce him a fine, a charming fellow. Let him associate with the gluttonous man, and the wine-bibber, and not carry to their house and their table, the hard doctrine, and the pointed rebuke, and the distinct condemnation, and the zeal for his heavenly Father's honour, which characterized the sociality of Jesus Christ, and they will agree to love him.

And I have not my eye now fixed on the ministry in its grossest aspect; a ministry whose whole piety is a kind of charity that was not born in heaven, and has neither creed nor conscience. I do not associate such men with the ministers of Jesus Christ. But in that better school, where truth is held in high estimation, and charity is not sightless, and fellowship has gospel boundaries, it is feared that men may be found who are at great pains to avoid the afflictions of the gospel. If they speak of hell it is with an apology; if they describe a bad heart, they "hope better things of their audience," and if they are driven to rebuke a vice, they do it so tamely as to make no impression. Hence the world love them, and feed them, and rally round them, and admire their prayers, and their oratory, and enter into close leagues of friendship with them. But whether such was the character of *his* ministry, who came from heaven to publish salvation, demands a doubt.

The ministers of Jesus Christ must form an unpopular character. They must be more serious, more holy, more circumspect, more watchful, and prayerful, and

heavenly-minded, than the world would choose to have them. They must adhere more tenaciously to the truth, to sound maxims and correct principles, than other men; must be emphatically "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." The traits of character which the world are prepared to eulogize, they are obligated to lash, and equally obligated to have on the very traits that give the world offence. They must be in character and conduct like their Master, having a conscience that will not bend to the exigencies of the moment; a sternness of virtue that cannot allow iniquity a smile, a fixedness of sentiment that looks every unhallowed maxim into shame, a regard to the divine glory that can sometimes wield the surge of rebuke, and drive iniquity from its presence. They must have on a holiness of character that can move on through the ranks of sin with unbending course; and command, by its self-respect, the reverence of the very men who would exterminate so stern an integrity.

And the character they cultivate in themselves they must sustain in others. The members of their churches must know that living as Christ would have them, they shall receive no reproach from their pastors, for not becoming, in the perverted meaning of the apostle, all things to all men.

They may still put on all the amiableness of the gospel, and show out the benevolence, the meekness, the kindness, the hospitality, and the ardency of friendship, that piety requires; and, finally, leave nothing to give offence, but the sternness of virtue. But in conjunction with these, there must be, in the ministers of Jesus Christ, traits of character, that the men of the world will not admire. Hence none of the prophets, nor apostles, nor Jesus Christ himself, could show kindness enough o atone to the world for their holy singularity. They

partook largely in the afflictions of piety, and went most of them to heaven from the cross, the sword, or the flames.

2. The ministers of Jesus Christ must *teach unpopular doctrines*. They must show the very men who feel themselves to be whole, and in no need of a physician, that they are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. They must exhibit the atonement of Christ to the very men who would perish rather than trust in him, as the only foundation of their everlasting hopes. The men who are prepared to say, What lack I yet? must be pressed with the necessity of being born again. The very men who can see little or nothing wrong in their whole life must be assured, that except they repent they must all likewise perish. And the decrees, and the sovereignty of God, that so exalt Jehovah, and so debase the rebel, must be urged upon the very men who have so little confidence in ther Creator, that they would not place the smallest temporal interest at his disposal. And how can such doctrines be popular with such men?

I know you will refer me to facts, and inquire, Why are there so many congregations who have an orthodox ministry, and still all has been harmony for half a century, while yet there have been few or no conversions? In this case I have an answer that perfectly satisfies me. The truth has never reached the conscience. It has been so tamely exhibited, that men have slept under it. Now it is the duty of Christ's ministers to cure this insensibility, and in doing it, just as sure as God is true, there must be given a new heart, or the unwelcome intruder will be made a partaker in the afflictions of the gospel. Compel a stupid man to feel the force of his own *creed*, and he will be as much offended as when you

press upon his conscience *doctrines* which he has long hated, and long since discarded.

I know there is a ministry which I dare not term heretical, but which gives no offence by its doctrines. The fact is, that the doctrines, though not denied, are never distinctly exhibited. Men care not what they *hear*, nor what *believe*, if they may be permitted not to *feel* nor *act*. Only suffer them to sleep on, and you may lecture from the Shaster, the Koran, or the Bible. Let it suffice that they be quiet and orthodox, and they care not if it be the quiet of death, or the cold orthodoxy of the grave. But let the truth drop from the lips of an honest ministry, and be pressed home with energy, upon "consciences that have not been sprinkled from dead works to serve the living God," and that ministry will soon become conversant with the afflictions of the gospel.

3. The minister of Jesus Christ must *urge* upon the world *unpopular duties*. It is a great mistake that men are any less displeased with the *duties* than with the *doctrines* of the gospel. Let duty be fully explained, and pressed home upon the conscience with energy, till men shall see no retreat from its obligations, and no press of doctrine, the most offensive, can give any keener pain, or be more sure, where God does not seal the word by his Spirit, to awaken the keenest displeasure. Make the man who never prays see the impiety of his neglect, and repeat to him that note of alarm, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name;" and you will soon discover that he feels himself as uncomfortably urged, whenever this duty is named, as when a doctrine which he does not believe, or does not love, is pressed upon his faith. Urge upon the covetous man the duty of giving liberally, no matter what the object, and he will writhe more under the press

of this duty, than when urged to believe the most odious *doctrine*. Urge home upon the conscience, no matter what duty, that men are unwilling to perform, and you offend them equally, as when you teach a *doctrine* they are reluctant to believe, and in either case draw upon yourself the afflictions of the gospel.

But the duty, as well as the doctrine, may be so tamely and so *prudently* named, as to produce no sensations. If men are asleep, and you do not so lift up your voice as to wake them, they care not whether the babbler utters a *duty* or a *doctrine*. But this would not have satisfied Paul. If he might have preached in Athens the true gospel, unmolested, but must have seen that people continue their idolatries, he would have felt that he was doing nothing. It is doubted whether *doctrine* or *duty* was ever urged home with gospel energy, but the result was, the believing of the doctrines, and the doing of the duty, or the great offence of the man upon whose irritated conscience they had been urged with unwelcome vehemency. Hence, again, the afflictions of the gospel.

4. The minister of Jesus Christ must advocate in his Church an *unpopular discipline*. Here let us stop to solve one problem. The men of the world are perpetually reproaching professors of godliness for their sin. Urge religion upon them, and they will reply, "I am in as fair a way for heaven as your Christians." And often we find it no easy matter to repel the charge. We lie down under it, and reply, "Truly there are men, without the pale of the Church, as generous, as pitiful, as public spirited, as hospitable, as quiet, as peaceable, as kind, as neighbourly, as some within." "We know," they will say, "that we do not pray as often, as loud, and as long,

as some of your hypocritical professors, but all this we more than balance by our other virtues."

Now from all this it would seem their wish, that the Church were more pure. Surely they would have reformed the very thing they complain of. But the very moment the Church commences a course of discipline, with any wayward brother, the world arms itself against all their efforts. And often is there raised without the Church, an opposition that would deter the Church from attempting to purify her fellowship. And the minister of Jesus Christ is understo d to be on the side of the Church's purity. Hence he becomes the butt of rebuke, with all those who would shield the offender; and should he be passive, even to a fault, still he must bear the whole blame of the process. and become often the scapegoat that bears away into the wilderness the sins of the whole brotherhood. Thus he becomes a large partaker in the afflictions of the gospel.

We are now prepared,

II. To say that the exhortation of the text implies *two things*.

1. That we so *minister* in our holy office, as to *make sure* to ourselves all the trials that *faithfulnes* in a world like ours *must incur*. We must form the very character the ungodly disapprove, nor be willing to lack its most odious ingredient. We may not lay aside for an hour, that sobriety, that spirit of dissent from error, that honesty which holds the tongue the sure index of the mind, that elevation of the affections which shrinks from a supreme engrossment in the conversation and the cares of the life that now is.

We may not conceal the features of the new man, and be religious in *secret* only, or when in the company of God's people. The world would agree to this. Can

we but act the mere gentleman in their society, and fawn and flatter as they do, and ever smile and be happy, whatever the conversation, or sentiments, or temper, or men with whom we come in contact, this would satisfy them, and we might be as religious as we please in our bed-chamber. But such was not the course of Jesus Christ, nor yet of Paul, even when he became all things to all men. There must go with the man of God, visible as the features of his face, the strong outlines of his heavenly character. After all the allowance has been made that can be, for the difference of character and conduct that may exist between the disciple and his Lord, still, in a world like ours, all gay, and thoughtless, and dissipated, we are obligated to put on so much of the Lord Jesus Christ, and wear the lineaments of his image so prominent as to ensure us a share in the reproach that fell on him, and must help others to do the same; and must pour the whole mass of our influence into a mighty effort to make the whole Church of God as unlike the world as possible.

We must feel obligated to draw upon ourselves the reputation of sustaining an *unpopular creed*. We are obligated, I know, to give *offensive truth* the most *un*offending aspect, and may exercise all the wisdom we can summon in descrying the *Tempora molia fandi;* but when all this is done, still the whole truth, first or last, must come out, fully and plainly, and, when distinctly seen, will not be approved by ungodly men. And the odium felt toward the truth, will be promptly transferred to the man who enforces it upon the irritated conscience.

Now the faithful minister of Jesus Christ may not attempt to shun the trials that will thus ensue. It must be his wish, as soon as possible, to give the truth all that

plainness of exposition, and point of application. which will ensure the trials that follow. He may not keep the offensive doctrines out of view, nor exhibit his creed obscurely, nor throw in any salvo to prevent the truth from taking a rank hold, or so conduct that his daily lightness shall neutralize his Sabbath-day efforts; else he wickedly shuns the afflictions of the gospel. And with the same decision must he urge the unpopular duties of the gospel. He may not keep them out of view, nor present them obscurely, nor invent excuses for neglecting them, nor lavish his smiles upon the man who uniformly stands aloof from them. The precepts of Jesus Christ in all their self-denying, and expensive, and laborious, and holy, and unpopular attitude, must be promptly exhibited, as claiming the obedience of a world. And the *duties* of the Bible thus fearlessly exhibited, will as surely *convert* men, or *offend* them, as the *doctrines*. The matter of fact is, that the *precepts* imply the *doctrines*, as well as the *doctrines* the *precepts*, and the man who urges home upon the conscience the *hated duty*, no less than he who exhibits the *odious creed*, must calculate, unless the disciple be above his Lord, to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

And he must be known to be the advocate of a watchful discipline in the Church of Christ. He may be as adroit as possible in dividing the odium with the members of his Church, it should be their wish to be partakers with him, but when he has lain hid, and others have operated, as long as possible, the hour will at length come, in every bad case of discipline, when he must have an opinion of his own, and express that opinion, and make proselytes to that opinion, and it will be against the conduct of the offender, and will draw upon him the odium of one who needed the rod of discipline

to make him decent. And the offender has friends who will enlist with him, and feel with him, and hate with him, the minister of Christ, who led on his Church to the act which covers the Christian character of the offender with a cloud. Indeed it would be wrong, if it might be so, that a Church of Christ should bear, without the countenance of their pastor, the reproach of having administered a cruel censure upon a professed follower of Jesus Christ: Hence no escape from the afflictions of the gospel.

2. The injunction of the text implies, that when our brethren in the ministry have taken the course now described, and have drawn upon themselves the afflictions of the gospel, we *stand by* them, and *defend* them, and *encourage* them, and take, as far as may be, a part of their trials upon *ourselves*. I have suspected this to be the burden of the exhortation. The aged apostle exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, or Paul his prisoner, but to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, He must participate in the trials endured by his Father in Christ for his faithfulness in the dispensations of the gospel.

Let it not be said that the offence of the cross has ceased. I know that Christ's ministers are not now in danger of the same kind of persecutions as in the days of Paul. They do not fear dungeons, or fagots, or chains, or wild beasts, or the bloody cross. They may apprehend other woes however, as the lash of slander, the want of bread, the permanent enjoyment of a peaceful home, and the means of educating their offspring. And who would not avoid these by a more desperate effort than would be made to escape death itself. I know, too, that faith can lift the mind above a host of trials, and render

the hour of desperate onset a time of triumph, and make these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, issue in a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I know, too, that many ministers, not reputed unfaithful, escape the trials I speak of. There are no pointed exhibitions of truth, no extra efforts to save men from death, no energy of discipline, nothing to break in upon the dead calm by which a multitude of souls are cradled into the profoundest slumbers. And the result is, no revivals, not much growth in grace, and, of course, no disorder. And men, under such a ministry, often sleep so sweetly, that any voice which shall wake them, even the voice of the Spirit of God, is unwelcome. Now such a ministry, I know, will escape trials, and will need none of our sympathy. Pastor and people will plod on, till *he* is snatched to heaven, and they scattered upon the mountains, or gathered and saved at length under a better ministry that will need our sympathies.

III. I shall now offer some reasons why the ministers of Jesus Christ should *participate* with their *brethren*, in the *afflictions* that arise from a *faithful discharge* of their *duty*.

1. To *sustain* our brethren when they are in bonds for the gospel, is a *duty* we owe to Jesus Christ. He sent them to preach his gospel, assuring them that they went out as lambs among wolves, and promised to be with them even to the end of the world. And he makes good his promise, and is with them, and is a partaker in all the afflictions they suffer for his sake. Would we then do him honour, we must sustain whom he sustains, and sympathize with those who cannot compromise the honours of their Master to escape the cross. Permit me to say, as a minister of Jesus Christ, that I ask of the world no greater honour, than to be considered a prompt

partaker in the afflictions of every ambassador of his who suffers for his name's sake.

2. It is a *duty* we owe to *our brethren.* If we are the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ we all belong to the same embassy, and are obligated to kindness, not merely from Christian affection, but from that endeared brotherhood begotten by the additional relationship of office. Hence, with regard to every minister of Jesus Christ, I am bound, either to dispute his commission, or prove him a traitor to his Master, or stay his hands when they hang down. It was a law in Israel that if a beast had fallen under his burden, one that was passing by must lift him up; what then are we not obligated to do for our brethren in the gospel, when they faint under its afflictions.

3. Unless the ambassadors of Jesus Christ *sustain each other*, the influence of the gospel ministry, and of course its usefulness, are greatly *diminished.* Common sense declares that unity is strength. And each minister of the Lord Jesus Christ knows how his soul is waked to energy by a knowledge of the fact that he is sustained by his brethren in the same office. And the men we are sent to save are the more prepared to yield their hearts and their deportment to the influence of truth, when they see it brought to them by a united band; having all one commission, and one Master, and one creed, and one heart. It then comes like the overtures of peace, brought not by a single ambassador, but by the general of an army. Then the commission is respected, and the overtures receive prompt and serious attention.

4. Not a *few* of God's ministers have *quit* the work and others in the hour of conflict have looked about them for some other employment, because they conceived that they were not *promptly sustained* by their brethren.

They had been given a stubborn field to cultivate, all grown over with thorns and briars, and they laboured till they had richly earned the confidence of those who had occupied a less stubborn and more fruitful section of the vineyard; but at length they became wearied with perpetual effort, and finally quit the field. And it is a query worth our attention, whether a little timely help, would not have kept them in the work, and rendered them immensely useful, while now they are at some other service, and must die out of the vineyard. And there are probably many at this very moment looking about them for a school, secretaryship, or professorship, or a clerkship, by which they may earn a piece of bread for their children. And this at the very moment when we are making every possible effort to send forth more labourers into the vineyard. Now, why not make some effort to sustain those already at the work, and by partaking in their afflictions wake them to renewed enterprise, and a far more extended usefulness?

If any who have been commissioned are unworthy, then publish their character, and send them back to the plough, and the residue sustain. Shall those who are happily located fear injury to themselves, if they speak a kind word in behalf of some afflicted brother. I will not allow myself to believe that the legate of the skies can act from a motive so contracted. I will rather believe that depression of mind, under long protracted trials, has begotten in the minds of some good men the false impression that they were not duly sustained in their conflicts. And I will, in the mean time, place high in honour those noble men who have earned and obtained the reputation of strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees, and who have ventured to say to the fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. They have

kept many a good man in the field, and thus have virtually made more ministers than many who have pleaded eloquently the cause of charitable education. "These ought ye to have done, but not to have left the others undone." Said the apostle of the circumcision, after giving us a catalogue of his afflictions, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" This, it seems, was the lesson which his own trials had taught him.

Finally, brethren, feel not that the subject was an unnecessary exposure of ministerial weakness. We shall not give the churches confidence in us, by showing them that we have little confidence in one another. We shall not bless them, by neglecting and despising those in the ministry who suffer till they abandon the brotherhood, and go back into the world to get their bread. The desperate enemies of God, who are quarrelling with their minister because he has ventured to tell them the whole truth, may be glad if we will leave him unsustained, till they can devour him. But the good sense of God's people, and of all generous, noble-minded men, will love and honour us the more, the stronger is that ligature that binds together the hearts of God's ministers.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

NEW-JERSEY, AT THE RISING OF THE SUN,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1814;

IN A TIME OF GREAT AND GENERAL INTEREST ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION.

Intended to prevent the usual desecration of the day.

SERMON LVI.

THE MERCIES OF GOD NOT OBEDIENTLY RECIPROCATED.

Isaiah i. 2.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

How provoking is the sin of ingratitude! Among men it is considered unpardonable, while every other crime is forgiven. To be ungrateful argues a want of ingenuousness, of which even the most ungrateful are not willing to be accused. And can we wonder that pride takes the alarm, when a charge is brought that argues baseness, not to be found in the herd of the stall.

The descendants of Abraham, to whom the prophet refers, furnish us a long history of ingratitude. God had so distinguished them as to render them eternal debtors to his mercy, but they rebelled against him. He called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, a land of dark idolatry, gave him a large posterity, and made them the objects of his peculiar care. When oppressed with famine, the king of Egypt must feed them. When enslaved, God raised them up a deliverer, who brought them out with triumph. He bade the waves of the sea roll back and leave them a passage, and return to discomfit their foes. He miraculously clothed, fed, and guided them forty years. He then divided Jordan, and introduced them into a beautiful country, which, being watered

with enriching dews and timely showers, furnished them all that heart could wish. To give them room he "drove out the heathen with his hand." They had riches, honours, pleasures, and health. God delivered to them his word, called them his children, and placed in their magnificent temple the symbol of his presence.

When the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, and were abandoned to dispersion and slavery, he still kept his eye on Judah. He gave them wise kings, faithful prophets, and a mild and happy government. Still had they the means of knowing the mind of God. They had their temple, their high priest, their holy altar, and their daily sacrifice. For many years they sat under their vines and fig-trees, and none made them afraid.

Thus God nourished and brought them up as children. Had he not a right to expect their obedience? Was it not enough to astonish heaven and earth, to see it withheld? Can we, without amazement, be told, that in contempt of all this succession of mercies, that people made them other gods, and bowed to images which themselves had carved? They imprisoned their prophets, profaned their temple, hardened their hearts, and generated a posterity prepared to embrue their hands in the blood of Christ. All this mischief achieved by that people, God resolved to destroy; but first commands heaven and earth to listen to the story of their apostacy: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

How aptly does this whole history apply to us! If Judah's ingratitude has ever been *surpassed*—if it has ever been *equalled*, it has been in America. While attending to this short history, you have been making

the comparison between that nation and ours. *We* have been nurtured with the same fatherly care, and have been equally rebellious.

In pursuing the subject, I shall follow the natural division of the text, and show, *first*, that *God has nourished and brought us up as children*, and *secondly*, that *we have rebelled against him.*

I. I am to show that God has nourished and brought us up as children. A kind parent aims to promote the best good of his children, and to this point bends every effort. So the dealings of God with us have been calculated to promote our best good. "He hath not dealt so with any" other "nation." In proof of this assertion we have only to look at facts. Is it asked, Wherein has God given us proof of paternal affection? I answer,

1. In preparing us such a goodly land. It is believed that no portion of the globe is to the same extent, so *fertile*, *healthful*, and *pleasant* as the United States of America.

Our soil is *fertile.* Hardly does any land furnish its inhabitants comfort or luxury that ours does not yield for *us.* Our vallies wave with corn, our hills are white with harvests, and our very mountains, to their highest cliffs, feed our flocks. Till God shall become angry, and shall forbid the showers to enrich our fields, we never need be dependant for our bread or clothing on any other nation. What one region of our country does not produce, grows abundantly in some other.

And we draw sustenance from our bays and rivers. Thus were "the fields to yield no meat, and should the herd be cut off from the stall," we should be still supplied. On this point every reasonable desire is satisfied, and every ground of fear removed.

To *fertility* God has added *beauty.* Ours is all

that rich variety of scenery which can please the eye or charm the heart. Our extensive plains, encircled with cultivated hills, watered with meandering streams, and opening upon the traveller as he reaches the eminence, afford prospects the most enchanting. If any doubt whether our land is beautiful, ask the Christian, who, in some favoured hour, ascended the mountain, and felt his soul rise from the broad-spread landscape to the God who planned and built the scene;—ask *him* if "our lines have" not "fallen to us in pleasant places." Ask the mariner, who has been shipwrecked upon the coast of Africa, and has seen the sable tribes making a delicious meal on reptiles—ask him if we have not a goodly heritage. Ask the traveller who has scorched his feet in Arabian deserts, and has climbed the Ararat, if the tender mercies of the Lord to us are not great. Ask one, if you please, who has seen the lawns and parks of polished Europe, if nature has not furnished our America with richer lawns and nobler parks. Will it not excite gratitude to compare our country *in point of beauty*, with any region of the globe? What was once said of England is more true of America. "It is a paradise of pleasure, the garden of God. Our vales are like Eden, our hills as Lebanon, our springs as Pisgah, our rivers as Jordan, our walls the ocean, and our defence the Lord Jehovah."

Nor is any portion of the globe, to the same extent, more *healthful*. From the eternal snows of the north, and from the sultry heats and deadly blasts of the south, we are well removed. The longevity of our grand parents, recorded on yonder tomb-stones; the many in our assembly to-day, on whom is seen the blossom of the almond-tree, bear witness that God has blessed with health and long life, his American Israel. The num-

bers who can be spared from the sick and dying bed, to wait on God this morning in this house, bear testimony to the salubritry of our clime. Yes, God has fraught every gale with life, and has wafted health to us in every breeze. The effects of his bounty are seen in every countenance, and felt in every nerve.

In all this God has acted the part of a kind Father; has nourished and brought us up as children. The land of Canaan, although described as flowing with mik and honey, was not a better land. Nor will God demand less of us, than of Israel. He charges us with every field, every spring, and every river. He notes against us every shower that falls upon our hills, and every dew drop that moistens the vales.

2. There was a display of God's parental affection in giving us existence in this favoured land. Long had it been the lonely haunt of savages. Our forefathers were natives of other realms, realms now perhaps in ruins. If God had not intended to be a father to us, we might there have been born, and there have lived, in the midst of oppression, tears, and blood. We might have been forced into those armies, which have perished on the plains of Europe, stiffened with December's frosts, or fattening the soils with their blood. But God had kindnesses in store for us, and bid our fathers fly to some other land.

But *whither* could they fly? When they first began to feel oppression, America was unknown in Europe. It had lain hid beyond a vast expanse of trackless ocean, ever since it sprang from chaos. True, it had been visited, but from its dreary bourne, no one had returned to bear tidings. Driven before the eastern tornado, the wretched had known its rocky shores as the place of their midnight shipwreck; else unknown. But Divine Good-

ness, which had long kept it in reserve for us, raised it into view, just at the moment when oppression was preparing our fathers to wish and pray for some asylum where they and their children might be free. The immortal Columbus sought our shores. Our ancestors followed him, under the same Divine escort. And here we are this morning in a land of plenty, health, and freedom.

My hearers, do you not feel that God was kind in all this? Think then of the millions, who are this day miserably poor, on that ground where *we* might have been wretched paupers, if our forefathers had remained at home. Think of Europe's precious youth, who have been lately torn from home in their tender years, to man the navy and fill the armies. Think of the fathers, who now need sons to prop their age, but have lost them in battle. Ah! and mothers, more helpless still, without a child remaining to solace their widowhood. See that band of females! they have been to the shore to salute their husbands but they return in despair; their husbands have fallen in the field.* Think of the pleasant cottages wrapped in flames by the torches of a desolating army. Recollect the sufferings of that little Swiss Republic, to whom liberty was so dear, that mothers left their infants under the oak, and fought and fell by the side of their husbands. While humanity bleeds over these scenes of distress, let piety raise to heaven a tearful eye, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

3. As a parent his children, the Lord has instructed us. We were from infancy taught to read the Scrip-

* A scene actually witnessed not long since in England, on the return from Spain of a remnant of Lord Wellington's army.

tures, and were early placed under the droppings of the sanctuary. Many of us have been devoted to God in baptism, and have thus been made members of the school of Christ. Pious parents have whispered truth in our ears. Ever have we had, line upon line, and precept upon precept. In no other quarter of the globe have *all classes* the means of instruction. And in this matter has not the Lord been a kind Father? If a doubt remains, think of those crowds of Papists, who, through ignorance of the Scriptures, pray to departed saints, and tender gold for the pardon of sin! See those hordes of Mahometans, stupid as the beast, till their infuriated passions arouse them to spill a brother's blood. Think of the millions of Pagan tribes, who to this day worship a block of wood. Yes, think of the *hundreds* of millions, who never saw a Bible, who never enjoyed a Sabbath, and to whom no kind angel of mercy ever carried proffers of pardon. Think of these things, and you cannot doubt the fatherly kindness of God in providing for our instruction.

4. God has exercised parental love in *defending our country in times of danger*. Our whole history, from the first landing of our forefathers, is but one continued, affecting account of God's care of them and us. When that first ship brought that little band of persecuted Christians, and landed them, in the midst of winter, on Plymouth's bleak, inhospitable coast,—when they there kindled their first fire, amidst howling beasts and yelling savages,—when they there fell on their knees, and to heaven raised their eyes, streaming with tears,—when they covered their little babes with the leaves blown from the trees of autumn, and stationed a sentinel to watch the foe; how could it be doubted but they would be driven from the land they had reached? Who could have pre-

dicted, or would have dared to hope, that God would soon give them peaceable possession of all this extensive country?

And afterward, when the savage band conspired to destroy that little company of strangers,— when the scalping knife was raised over the slumbers of the cradle,— when the savage yell disturbed the midnight dream, and the angry flames were consuming the little thatched hovels where our mothers slept, who could have thought that God intended so soon to give the word, and bid those savages retire to the western forests?—who could have believed, or dreamed, that those miserable hovels would in a few years be exchanged for these beautiful mansions which now adorn our land?

And when, afterward, the merciless Frenchmen bore down upon us from the north, and in the west hired against us the bloody tomahawk,—when their ships of war covered our lakes, and spread destruction along our Atlantic shores, and the savage band broke in upon our frontiers, each pressed on by infernal fury; who could have thought that heaven designed, by this war, to prepare us for future conflicts, and raise us up an immortal Washington to be the future saviour of our country.

And when, at length, the very land that gave us birth became hostile;—when her floating purgatories thundered on our coast, and burned our cities, and her hard hearted veterans were ravaging our country, stripping our fathers of their flocks and herds, and our mothers of their well-earned food, and of the couch on which they dared not rest, and could not sleep;—when at length we were forced to make an appeal to the sword, and our little companies of undisciplined troops were rallying round their General;—when our fathers began to fall in the high places of the field, and our mothers, with some

of us infants in their arms, fled from the foe, and saw him burn their dwellings;—when at length the temples of the living God were converted into barracks, profaned with the soldier's oath, and dissipated night with their blazing spires;—when the meek ambassador of the cross* must die for loving his country, and for wishing to be free; and when all hearts began to ache and to bleed, and Heaven had not yet begun to give us the victory,—in this trying hour, who would have thought that God intended so soon to deliver us from the oppressive yoke of our parent country, and make us an independent and happy republic.

While we look round us, and see some present, who still wear the scars they received in that perilous hour, we feel emotions of gratitude which we cannot suppress. Yes, fathers! while we bless God for being our rock of defence in the desperate hour, we thank *you* for the efforts you made to earn and deliver to us the fair inheritance of freedom. We never will, *no never!* forget your toils and dangers. We will cherish you in your declining years, and when you are dead, we will lead our infant children to your graves, and tell them the history of your sufferings in the cause of freedom. But, fathers, while we thank you that you fought in Israel's hosts, we entreat you to love Israel's God. And ye aged mothers, you fled with us from the malice of the foe: O! flee with us from the wrath to come!

Here I could stay and mention other mercies till the sun had gone down. God has given us a happier form of government than is now enjoyed in any other portion of the globe. Life, property, and the rights of conscience are secure. Parents are not constrained to send their children, at the call of a tyrant, to be trained up to the

* Mr, Caldwell, of Elizabeth-Town.

art of murder. As yet *we* have suffered but little by the present distressing war. The foe has destroyed others; fellow-citizens have spilt their blood in the field, and others have lost their all, while we are unmolested. Nor have we felt the distresses of famine. The poorest among us have bread, while, in our world, and doubtless in some parts of our land, there are those who are destitute. God has kept us too from those plagues and pestilences which have desolated other countries. Our breezes are yet laden with health. O how good is the Lord!

And we could tell of *individual* blessings. God has guarded our lives. In the midst of a thousand snares we have been safely kept. Who can say why *we* have not been numbered among the millions dead, or the thousands now in the agonies of dissolution. Every day and every hour have our lives been forfeited. If God had bidden us die any morning or any evening, he had still been just and good. But he yet allows our blood to flow warm in our veins, and the heart to beat high with life in our bosoms. In all this how strong a testimony of the divine goodness!

But our wonder must increase. God has not only spared us, and defended us from harm, but has with his bounty rendered our lives comfortable and happy. We have been surrounded with every thing that could sweeten life. Our friends have smiled upon us and loved us. "God has fed us with the finest of wheat, and with the honey out of the rock has he satisfied us." We have sat peaceably in our dwellings, and have seen the rich harvests ripening in our fields, while other dwellings have resounded with dying groans, and other fields have been fattened with human gore. Thus God has employed his wisdom and power in making rebels happy. If all

this does not excite our gratitude, the beasts of the stall will find a tongue to reproach us: for "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."

But, to crown our other mercies, to blacken our ingratitude, and raise our wonder to its climax, God offers us eternal life through his Son. We are pressed with the obligations of dying love. The Holy Spirit, with kind intent, has come down among us. Through all the past year he has been knocking at the door of some of our hearts. And perhaps many present have continued to reject his kindest entreaties. And still divine compassion waits to save.

Thus after our cup has run over with earthly blessings, God has opened to us all the treasures of heaven. First he fills our table with his fruits, and his wines, and then invites us to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here is unparalleled benevolence. No world has known the like. The angels have seen nothing like it in heaven, devils have heard of nothing like it in hell. That God should be kind to the *good* is to be expected; but that infinite wisdom and love should exhaust their skill to make a *rebel* happy, is enough to excite wonder in the breast of Gabriel.

Having thus nourished and brought us up as children, had not the Lord a right to expect obedience? Are we not the basest of creatures if we do not love and serve him? I appeal to conscience, which God has placed as his witness, in your bosom. What demand does that messenger of heaven make upon you to-day? Should not the passing hours be spent in God's praise? If otherwise employed, will not the God of Israel be angry? And yet we know that none will give him praise but those who love him. All others will profane this day,

and thus provoke his wrath. I proceed to the other part of my subject.

II. While God has been exhibiting all this parental affection, we have *rebelled* against him. Every breach of God's law, every departure from duty, every unholy affection and improper action is *rebellion*. In our case, as in that of Judah, when God complained by the prophet, we exhibit *degeneracy* as well as *rebellion*. We have departed from the piety and rectitude of our forefathers. I shall at present mention some of the prevailing sins of our land, by which it is manifest that we are both a *degenerate* and *rebellious* people. And while I proceed, every one must allow his conscience to do its office. It is to no purpose that the gospel is preached, unless the truth is *felt*.

The first sin I mention as proving our *degeneracy* and *rebellion*, is the want of family religion in our land: instance family prayer. While we are commanded to pray with all manner of prayer, lifting up holy hands to God, many families entirely neglect the duty. From no domestic altar ascends their morning and evening sacrifice. They rise with the sun, and address themselves to the business of the day, without asking God to watch or guide them. I fear some of my hearers did not pray in their families this morning. God only knows. And no doubt as many will retire this evening, without thanking God for preserving goodness, or engaging any heavenly guard to watch the sleeping pillow. Now if parents do not pray in their *families*, we cannot hope that they do it in their *closets*. That parent who finds secret prayer delightful, will endeavour by example to teach his children prayer. It is reported that some *professors of religion* have no prayer in their

families, and ask no blessing over their food. Some are said to pray only on the Sabbath, and ask a blessing over one meal in the day. Why not, with the same propriety, pray once in the year, and ask only an annual blessing over the ingathered harvest? This would cut the business short.

In this point we have degenerated. It is said that among our forefathers there was no family without a domestic altar, no little helpless immortals without a father's prayers. They partook not of the Divine bounty till they had blessed the Giver. Could they return they would blush to own their offspring.

How can the Chistian neglect duties so plain? How can the father, whose title implies the warmest affection, let his children retire at night. till he has committed them to the care of God? If neglected by the father, how can the mother, a name yet more tender, lay her little ones upon their pillows, till she has put them under the care of the watchman of Israel. How do careless parents know that their children will live till the morning? And should they die on that night, when they were not the subjects of parental prayer, how must those parents feel? With what heart-rending anguish must they convey their bodies to the grave. The neglect of this duty in particular, and of family religion in general, is doubtless a crying sin, which proves our *apostacy* and *rebellion*, and must draw down Divine judgments.

2. Another common sin, equally manifesting *degeneracy* and *rebellion*, is the neglect of discipline in families and churches. Many families have no government. The children never feel restraint, and so never learn obedience. The consequence is, they often despise their parents, and prove scourges to society. The world is the loser by their existence. They live only to cumber the

ground, and reproach their parents. How ashamed ought parents to be of such children! and how afraid should society be of such parents!

In Churches the same neglect of discipline prevails. Some, who have no pretensions to heart religion, are admitted to the communion. Many are seen there who are not *moral*. Yes! the lips of profaneness touch the symbols of a dying Christ! Hands polluted with the intoxicating bowl, and trembling under its dire effects, are moved to the sacred cup! The scorner, in many places, takes his seat among the followers of the Lamb! The very disciples of Iscariot, who envy Jesus a throne with the Father, and would pluck every gem from his crown; who trample upon truth; and would gladly extirpate the Church, or at least kindle a hell in her bosom—these come forward, with a brazen front, and commemorate the dying love of Christ! Were He to come and put himself again in the power of sinners, would not many of our communicants leave the sacrament and go to crucify him? In the days of our forefathers, there was not this want of discipline. Every family was a little Church, in which pious parents bent every effort to make their children like themselves. Departure from duty met reproof. The child who would disobey a parent, disrespect superiors, disturb devotion, or profane the Name of God, would meet the frowns of his play-fellows.

The church-member who walked disorderly was reproved, and at once either reclaimed or cut off. None came to the Lord's table, who were not strictly moral and hopefully pious. They had no idea, in those days, that unrenewed men had any right to the children's bread. If they were correct, we are degenerate. It would be happy for the Church and the world, if that golden age could return. And return it must; discipline must be

administered, before there will be a reformation of morals, or any extensive revival of religion in our land. And have we not reason to believe that a reformation in this matter must precede the removal of those judgments which we begin to feel. If God frowned because he *disapproved*, why smile till he *approve*?

3. The profanation of the Sabbath is another general sin, proving us *degenerate* and *rebellious*. Once that day was respected in America. The man who did not regard the Sabbath was not esteemed. The person who walked the streets on that day, unless to or from the house of God, was considered a disturber of the public peace.* Then the waterman anchored his vessel in the harbour, till the hours of Sabbath were by; the traveller delayed his journey, and the young laid aside their pastimes. Now the sailor begins his voyage, the traveller pursues his journey, young men their pleasures, and children their sports on that sacred day. On many public streets the way to the temple is obstructed with teams, and as you enter the very doors of the sanctuary, your ears are assailed with the oaths of the heaven-abandoned teamsters. The inn-keeper and his family can never hear the gospel; they might as well live in India: they must be at home to serve the Sabbath-breaker. In many parts of our land the evening of the Sabbath is not regarded.

And there are none who dare oppose this flood of corruption. One plea is, there are no laws. If we have no laws sufficient to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, and our Legislators refuse to enact any, we must be a very corrupt people; if we have, and dare not en-

* In one of the largest States in the Union, a public officer stopped the Lieutenant-Governor, as he was walking out on the Sabbath, and obliged him to return.

force them, then our corruption is incurable. In either case, we have a striking demonstration that we are a rebellious and degenerate people.

4. "Because of swearing the land mourneth." This sin proves us *degenerate* and *rebellious*. The profane oath used to be the subject of public prosecution. Men dared not take in vain the name of the Lord their God. When respect for the great Jehovah did not restrain, the fear of man did. But the gold has become dim. In many awful instances, the child who has just begun to speak, is taught to swear. The evening streets profanely echo with the names of the eternal God. The inn, formerly the peaceable asylum of the pious traveller, is now often rendered intolerable by resounding oaths and curses. What sin can be more daring? It is a direct attack upon a holy God. It evinces a heart desperately rebellious. Its prevalence evinces a state of society monstrously degenerate.

5. Another sin, equally proving us *rebellious* and *degenerate*, is intemperance.* This is a growing sin, which should alarm every friend to human happiness. It prevails among both sexes,† and in all classes of society. Numberless families in our country are rendered miserable by this unnatural iniquity. To-day they are happy and useful, to-morrow lost. Intemperate creatures are now found in every place. They come to our holy communion, they are entrusted with public offices, they officiate in our Churches, and have, in some distressing instances, made their way into the sacred desk, and have there stood in the place of God's ambassador.

* It is credibly reported, that in the first settlement of this country, spirituous liquor was kept only by the apothecaries as a medicine.

† It is ascertained to be fact, that under the pretence of the sick headache, many ladies of fashion retire to sleep off the fumes of excessive drinking.

6. Another sin which proves us *degenerate* and *rebellious*, is the existence of two *hostile* political parties. The manner in which these parties treat each other, prove us a vicious race. Each accuses the other of designing the ruin of his country, of being vile, and false, and under foreign influence. Now if both divisions speak truth, in bringing this charge, then we are all an abandoned people; if one party only speak truth, still about half of us are irrecoverably lost; and if neither keep the truth, then "all men are liars." Take either ground and we are a wicked race. An unhappy result of this political division is, that we have corrupted the press. It is almost impossible to learn *truth* from the public gazettes. By party prejudice and rage, facts are discoloured. The honest man dares not confide in what he reads. On either side the plainest facts are sometimes obstinately and perseveringly denied:—I do not charge it all to the editors, nor dare I attempt to exonerate them.

Once things were not so. Our fathers knew but one party: they were Americans. They contended only for the interests of their *own* country. Every public paper was the vehicle of *truth*. If one said, "I saw it written thus in the *newspaper*," there were none to contradict. Nothing was written there that was not believed to be truth. But that golden age is gone. Truth, unable to breathe our polluted atmosphere, has taken its flight. As if the tongue, that "world of iniquity," could not sufficiently disperse falsehood, men have taught the paper and ink to lie; and yet there is not a shadow of evidence, that there may not be on both sides of the question, the firmest friends and vilest enemies of their country.

Here I could enumerate many other sins; among which are conspicuous a disposition in professors of religion to conform to the world, the little regard paid to an oath, a proneness in ministers to seek *popularity* rather than *usefulness*, to consult the *taste* rather than the *good* of their hearers, and the prevailing propensity to asperse character:—I am ashamed to name any more.

These sins have offended God, and he has come out of his holy place to punish us. If we do not repent, how can we hope that God will not treat us as he has other wicked nations, and discharge upon us, ultimately, the full vials of his wrath. Is there not occasion why this day should be devoted to God? If he be for us, none can be against us; but if God forsake us, we are as stubble, and can be trodden down by any foe that he may commission. And can we hope that he will continue to protect us, when discipline and prayer are neglected; when the name, the worship, the Sabbath, and the sacred honour of God are disregarded; and when every sin that can be named prevails? Will he continue to shield us by his power, when no longer his people? Will he be "a wall of fire round about us," when no longer "the glory in the midst of us?" As the Lord liveth our sins have placed us in danger.

Is it not then a time when all classes of men should fear before the Lord? Ought not the ministers of the Gospel to take their stand between the porch and the altar, and cry, with incessant tears, "Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy heritage to reproach." Have they not reason to fear that the ark of God may be taken from us, and carried to the heathen? Alas! if we look round us must we not fear that the divine glory is now hovering over the threshold, in the attitude of departing.

Since our iniquities put us in danger, may every watchman be awake upon his watch-tower, and be ready to give the alarm, that if he cannot save others, he may at least free his own skirts from the blood of souls.

And shall not parents, who look forward to the destinies of a rising offspring, which they are about to leave in the midst of dangers like these; parents to whom God has committed in charge souls more precious than material worlds,—shall they not this day mourn over their own sins and the sins of their children? Shall they not bring them in faith and prayer to the arms of a compassionate God. My dear fathers and mothers, soon opportunity to pray for your children will be gone. Your withering locks will soon lie in the dust. We do hope that before your dissolution arrives, we shall be the subjects of your earnest prayers. We entreat you to pray for us to-day.

My Christian friends, it will become us to lie low in the dust to-day, and to review all our sins, by which perhaps we have stumbled the impenitent, and provoked our kind Redeemer. Think, brethren, of the impending dangers. Every thing dear to the pious heart is at stake; the country bought with the blood of our fathers; yes, and the American churches bought with richer blood. As we inquire now respecting the seven churches of Asia, others may, another day, inquire, "Where are now the once flourishing churches of America?" O, is this ground, made sacred by the impress of a Saviour's feet, to be trodden down by a savage band? Is this temple of God to become, ever, a Mahometan mosque. After God has baptized it with his Spirit, will he suffer it to become a heathen temple? "O! tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon!" The enemies of truth will triumph. Christians, pray this day for

Zion. Go to your closets, while others are abusing the day, and deplore prevailing iniquities, and weep over a people, who, by their sins, are destroying themselves. If God will not forgive us, and still be for us, we die. And the prayers of the saints must bring the blessing down.

One word to the impenitent. This is an important day for you, but I fear that some of you may this day do your souls much injury. The saints consider your danger very great, and many a prayer has ascended this morning from the "dwellings of Jacob" in your behalf. If ruin comes upon our land, you have no place of refuge. The Christian has a strong tower, into which he can run and be safe; but destruction will overtake you if out of Christ. O! what need have you to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep! All your sins are still written against you. Not one of all the myriads is pardoned. See to it that you do not act to-day so as to provoke God to anger, and perhaps induce him to abandon you forever. May we all so spend the day as to do our country good, and promote our future eternal blessedness.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE

OF

AMHERST COLLEGE,

AUGUST 9, 1820.

SERMON LVII.

THE INDUSTRIOUS YOUNG PROPHETS.

II. *Isaiah*, vi. 1–3.

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take there every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants, and he answered, I will go.

About nine hundred years before Christ, there was at Jericho or Gilgal, some place near to Jordan, a school of the prophets, at the head of which was the worthy and venerable Elisha. The government of Israel was in the hands of Jehoram, a degenerate son of the impious Ahab. It was a time of general corruption; the prophets were treated with neglect; and the honours due to God were given to an idol. Still the prophets were employed in promoting the worship of God, and their number increased till they had occasion to enlarge the place of their tent. In the simple and interesting history of this enterprise, we learn, that the prophets, though poor, and not held in very high estimation *in that degenerate age*, were pious, honest, and industrious.

They seem to have dwelt together, that under the tuition of their honoured father, they might become prepared to teach and prophecy in Israel and the neighbouring countries. They were, no doubt, at this time, frequently consulted by the leaders of Israel, notwithstanding their degeneracy and corruption.

I presume it can need no apology, if I glance from this school of the prophets to the education of a gospel ministry. O could I, in the transition, bring with me into gospel times the faith of Elisha, and transfer into my audience the zeal of his associates! Then the building we propose to erect would soon rise, and the church, down to the latest ages, feel and rejoice in the benevolent enterprise. I shall take occasion to remark in the

First Place, *That, up to this moment, very inadequate provision is made for replenishing the gospel ministry.* This treasure is committed to earthen vessels; ministers are dying men. When we have served the church a few days, we go the way of all the earth, and the places that knew us know us no more forever. But the churches must still have a ministry; and that ministry be composed of *men*, not *angels*; *men educated by human means*, not inspired with miraculous gifts. Hence there must be made a perpetual effort to create this supply of pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. But the present ratio of supply is entirely inadequate to the exigencies of the church. On this subject there needs no other argument but a statement of facts, of which there could be presented a list that would move any but a heart of iron. A very few of these facts, drawn from the very best authorities, I will take the liberty to mention.

The nine millions of souls in these United States, have the service, it is believed, of only about two thousand five hundred ministers who are competent to preach the gopsel. But if instead of this number we had nine thousand, each must then have the care of one thousand souls. But in a large proportion of our country, owing

to the scattered state of its population, five hundred souls would be an extensive charge. Hence, nine thousand ministers, in addition to all we have, would be but a bare supply for this district of the church of Christ. But this number would equal that of the ministers educated in times past in all the colleges in the United States in nearly twenty years. While, then, we might be preparing this supply, many ministers will go to their graves, and others be disabled, and our population will have almost doubled.

We are assured, that in the three southernmost of the Atlantic States, containing perhaps a million and a half of souls, there are but one hundred and ten competent ministers ; while in one district of South Carolina, containing nine hundred square miles, there is but one place of worship, and that not used, and not one Christian church or minister of any denomination. In the whole of Indiana, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan and Missouri, a district of country large enough for a continent, and containing at least three hundred and fifty thousand souls, there are not twenty competent ministers ; of course, but one to more than twenty thousand. In East Tennessee, there are in seventeen counties more than one hundred thousand, while fourteen of these counties are without one regular minister of the gospel. In the west of Virginia, in eight counties, are forty-seven thousand souls connected with no religious society ; and four whole counties without any religious institutions whatever. In another district there are fifty-three thousand souls, in another twenty thousand, and in another still sixty thousand, all in about the same deplorable condition. In Pennsylvania there are extensive districts in which there never was a school, where more than half the adults can neither read nor write, many

never saw a Bible nor any book, nor ever heard a sermon. One district of forty thousand souls, has but one fixed pastor. In the state of New-York there could be settled immediately, were they to be found, two hundred ministers. And if we should survey the limits of New-England, we should see some dreary moral deserts. In the two oldest counties of New-Hampshire, there are about forty-five towns without a ministry. But I have not time to enlarge. Allowing that these statements may be in many respects not exactly correct, still they are evidence of a wide and fearful desolation. If but the one half is true, it presents to the eye of charity a moral landscape of wide and fearful dimensions.*

If you could read the epistles that pour these complaints into our ears, you would weep if you ever did, or would die with shame, or would rise to a tone of charity that many have not reached. Now these desolate places must be cultivated, these wastes of death must be fertilized. But where are they to find a ministry? The common resources are utterly inadequate to this home supply. But in the mean time we need missionaries to send to the heathen. Of these there are six hundred millions who pay their supreme homage to stocks and stones. The United States, it is computed, ought to despatch to their help at least two thousand missionaries, *and will do it*, if the time has come, as we presume it has, when the Christian community, with the charter of eternal life in their hands, can sleep no longer.

And still the ministry must be replenished at home. If the probability is, that we shall feel it our duty soon to support among the heathen, a number of missionaries

* We are happy to say that the state of things, in all these cases, are greatly altered for the better, and that this institution, notwithstanding its youth, has had its full share in producing these happy results.

greater than that of the ministers now within our limits, pray from what resource can we obtain that enormous supply? To *export the whole* of our ministry, would render our own country the valley of death. It is impossible not to see that the Christian churches have neglected their duty too long. We must be more thoroughly awake soon, or nothing but a boundless desolation stares us in the face. The wastes of death are already so wide that they almost outmeasure the hope of cultivation, and they are daily augmenting their horrid circumference. Our children, *when we shall have done all that we can*, are very likely to be among those who shall cry for the bread of life, and perish before their cry is heard. When they shall have attended our funeral, they may retire to the west, and there pine away in their sins, while there falls upon their ears no sound of mercy, and their eyes see not upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth. We may miss our children in heaven, and know then, but know too late, that they have perished through our negligence. While we thus weep over the fearful delinquencies in the ministry of reconciliation, it is cheering to know,

II. That we have the *materials* and the *means* of an abundant supply. When I speak of the *materials*, my eye is searching among the churches for the happy subjects of our late revivals. Many of them I perceive are in the vale of poverty, and would rejoice to be useful, if they might presume to hope, that they could be equipped for the work, and that God would employ them in his service. They are waiting, it is presumed, till this institution rise, and some kind voice invite them to come and take sanctuary under its covert. If they could equip themselves they would ; or if they dared to hope that

they were worthy, they would pour their cry into our ears, and give us no rest till we had made them the recipients of our charity. A few years since, if we had been awake to this interest, it would not have been easy to find materials. God had suffered our youth to grow up in unbelief, and thus had chastised us for our negligence. But, anticipating the close of our portentous slumber, his mercy has waked, and prepared the rising generation to be educated, and employed to lead to conquest and to glory the sacramental hosts of God's elect. If we were prepared and would enter to-morrow one hundred upon our opening list of beneficiaries, it is presumed they could readily be found, and their hearts would leap for joy to know that they might be furnished to the good work of pointing sinners to the Saviour.

And we have abundantly the *means*. If each person in the United States would give one cent a year for this purpose, it would amount to ninety thousand dollars annually, a sum the interest of which would discharge annually and forever the expenses of more than fifty beneficiaries, or if the principal should be expended, it would support for one year nine hundred. If each church member in the United States should contribute to this object annually one dollar, it would probably raise the sum of four hundred thousand dollars, and support four thousand students. Most congregations beside supporting the ministry, could defray the expenses of one student annually, and thus furnish every seven years one minister. In one timely shower of rain, God could restore all we had expended for years; or by warding off one storm, could save for us a far greater amount. The man who could lose an ox every year, and not be poor, or could bear the expense of one fit of sickness, could pour the price of that ox, or the expenses of that visitation, into the

treasury of the Lord, and not be poor. But if half the number who *could* make this sacrifice, *would* do it, and devote the avails to this object, we could very soon tenfold the number of our ministers, and make the desert and the solitary place glad. If one can spend idly, in the course of the year, ten days, and not be poor, he could employ those days, and not be poor, in earning something for this benevolent purpose. But if half who actually make this sacrifice should thus employ their time, the treasury of the Lord would soon be full. If the youth who annually spend ten dollars in mere extravagancies, would give the one half of this expenditure to educate pious and worthy young men for the gospel ministry, there would be made no farther calls upon the Christian public. If farmers would cultivate each a quarter acre of their waste lands in the best manner, and give the proceeds to the Lord, it would probably tenfold the sum that has usually been given for all the benevolent purposes for which contributions have been made. If the extra crops of the present year, were devoted to the Lord, and expended in thrusting forth labourers into his harvest, the fields that are white would soon be gathered in. Were that sum saved, which is annually lost by mere negligence, it would forever supply the churches with a well-educated ministry, would furnish an army of evangelists, and would fertilize the wastes of a moral world. Instead of its being the fact, as the covetous daily plead, that our resources are exhausted, they are really yet untouched. The man can hardly be found, who has denied himself a comfort to revive a famishing world. And, as it will always happen, those who complain the *most* have done the *least*, and most of those who complain, have done nothing. The man who loves to do good with his wealth is attentive to every call of charity, and has made every

benevolent institution feel the effects of his liberality and his prayers, is grieved that he does so little, and has never been heard to say, that the calls upon his charity have become so frequent as to be oppressive. That we have the means abundantly, of making exertions that we have never made, none can doubt.

III. It is our duty *to use these means*, and supply ourselves and others with a well educated ministry. The duty of preparing *ourselves* a ministry admits of no controversy. If a congregation in each thirty or forty years wears out a minister in their service, it is but honest to calculate, that such a congregation should, in every such period, in addition to supporting the ministry already in their employ, educate one, that the list may be kept full. The only question is, Shall we provide a surplus, for those who are destitute of a ministry, and cannot be expected to supply themselves? A very little reflection, it would seem, must render this matter plain. If we look about us upon the waste places, we shall feel that we are imperiously urged to provide them a supply of pastors. There are churches very near us, which have been so unhappy as to lose the blessing they once enjoyed. Perhaps the surviving members had no partnership in the sin that stripped them of the ministry. They are begging for help, would do all in their power to provide themselves the gospel and its ordinances; but when they have done all they can do, they still hunger for the bread of life. The Domestic Missionary Society, instituted for their relief, have assured us, that, although their funds have been low, much of the time since their organization they have done nothing, *because men could not be found suitable for the service.* When I read of this fact, it had on my ear the effect of a dying groan, and stole through the heart like the cold stream

of death. Said I to myself, Are the churches that our fathers planted, which they watered with their tears, in whose bosom they expired, and in whose prosperity, though now in heaven, they have still a deep and unalienable interest—are they to become extinct? Is that covenant broken, which it was promised should be perpetual? Had their Redeemer said, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me," and has that city been demolished, and have those walls been thrown down? Have the children who there received the seal of the covenant, no promise left on which to hang their hopes? If we are to do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith, to help them to re-establish in their temples the ministry of reconciliation is the first *duty* of piety, and the first *dictate* of humanity. They hunger and thirst after the bread of life, have received a pledge that God will sanctify them through his truth, and cannot be denied the blessing requisite to the fulfilment of this promise.

Or if we turn our eye to those who have gone to the western woods, we shall see opened before us a field which we dare not refuse to cultivate. They have been used to the blessings of a Christian land, have heard and loved the church-going bell, have enjoyed schools, academies and libraries, and been revived by the ordinances, and must they now be excluded forever from these privileges? They cannot educate for themselves a ministry, nor build in the wilderness the unnumbered conveniences they left behind. They have turned their eye to us, and if we refuse them help we cover them with unmingled despair. They have thus before them none but the comfortless prospect of seeing their children become wild men, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them; nor *this* the least; for, without the gospel,

there is nothing before their dear devoted offspring but the blackness of darkness forever. The mother, that had devoted her children to God, and has gone with them into the western wilds, must now die crushed with the tremendous thought, that she became a mother, merely that she might people the realms of death. Already she has hung her harp upon the willows, and there it must hang, till some kind missionary enters the door of her cabin, and wipes away her tears; and this missionary *we* must educate. Ten long years must still roll away before he arrives, and she in the mean time, bleached by the frosts of age, trembles on the brink of the grave, but dare not die till her hopes are accomplished, and her children saved.

And who are these inhabitants of the forest? They are our fathers and mothers, our brethren and sisters, our children, our friends and neighbours. They were born in the houses we occupy, have gone from our families and our bosom, were the companions of our childhood and our youth. We took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company. Hence the cry they utter sounds in our ears loud and eloquent as the shrieks of death. If we do *not hear* nor *help* them, then the mother has forgot her sucking child, and feels no compassion for the son of her womb. Do you say, They *shall* have a gospel ministry? My heart responds, *They shall.*

But I hear too the voice of the savage, sounding from the bosom of that trackless forest still beyond. And there is in that cry a wild and native eloquence.

"You have stripped us of our hunting ground; all in life that we held dear; you have corrupted our morals; our tribes, already incalculably diminished, have onthing before them but the dreary idea of being swal-

lowed up, unless it be the more fearful apprehension of perishing forever in our sins. Once we were the heirs of your soil, we now only ask to die the heirs of that salvation, which is revealed to you in your Bibles." A cry like this has been uttered and is heard. Already the heralds of salvation have gone to look up the remnants of their depopulated tribes, and point them to a Saviour. Their sun is setting in the west, and we should give evidence that we had their unpitying *nature* as well as their *soil*; were we willing to see it go down in total darkness. If the few that remain may live forever, it alleviates the retrospect of their wrongs, and creates one luminous spot in the Egyptian cloud that hangs over the place of their fathers' sepulchres. I would give any price for their forgiveness and their blessing; and it cheers my heart that my country is beginning to pay the long arrears which are due to that injured people.

Now suppose, that not merely from the west, but from other heathen lands, we hear a cry for the gospel. If the millions of India ask us to send them back in Bibles and missionaries the wealth we have imported from their shores, can we say to them, "Be ye warmed and be ye fed?" If Palestine, and the shores of the Mediterranean, are seen pining with spiritual famine, and should beg us to send them that bread of heaven which their forefathers sent to ours, would there be no eloquence in that prayer? Or if Africa, poor ill-fated Africa, should beg us to make them a Sabbath, and build them a sanctuary, and send them a Bible and a missionary; would they deserve no answer? Or if they should be too much oppressed to utter any cry, and we should only know that their highest deity is a serpent, and their richest hope the repose of the grave, can we pass by on the other side? Their sons have served our fathers and

us ; we have taught them nothing but our vices ; and if now, when the promise is about to be fulfilled, and Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God, we should refuse them the gospel, how can we answer for the stripes, and chains, and servitude, and famine, with which we have taxed them ? What defence can we make when their compassionate Redeemer shall advocate their cause.

Poor Africa must share, though late, the blessings of the gospel ; it must be sent to the shores of Palestine, must be propagated in India, must sound through every isle of the ocean, and must go, with its stores of blessings, to every section of this dark and desolate world. But it cannot be sent ; the miseries that it would alleviate must remain without a cure, till there is a great augmentation of the army of evangelists. Hence we *must* use the materials and employ the means in our power to equip young men for this service. And every year's delay will bury millions who have never heard of Christ, and have no faith in his blood. Hence we are urged to the work, by all that is fleeting in time, by all that is valuable in the soul, by all that is bright and rich in the thought of heaven, and by all that is dark and dreary in the idea of hopeless perdition.

IV. *Union* in the Christian world will insure *success*. Said the young men to the aged and venerable Elisha, "Be content, we pray thee, and go with thy servants." There was union ; and very soon the trees of Jordan fell, and the school of the prophets was builded. How simple, how interesting, and how full of instruction is this page of sacred story ! How the venerable prophet, as he bore up a beam from the wood, evinced his faith in the covenant, nerved the young men to exertion, and magnified his office ! Let the Christian world unite, and the work we propose will be easy. When all shall do a little,

none will be burdened. We can educate teachers for ourselves, and furnish a surplus for the outcasts of Israel. And to do it all we hardly need deny ourselves a single comfort. We have only to gather up the fragments and let nothing be lost, and they will feed millions of the hungry. When we can *unite* in the effort, it will be easy to do all that *duty* and that *benevolence* require. The waste places will be repaired, the destitute will be furnished with the bread of heaven, the heathen will be tamed to civility, and will burn their temples and their idols, Ethiopia will stretch out her hands unto God, the posterity of Abraham will own their allegiance to their Saviour, and be again grafted into their own olive tree, the Turk and the Arab will exchange the mosque and the Koran for the sanctuary and the Bible, the Tartar will pitch permanently his tent about the house of the missionary, and Jesus, the long neglected Redeemer, will receive the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

And there is nothing visionary in all this. It is all promised, it is all expected, it will soon transpire ; and the man who will not believe, like the infidel of Samaria, may die in the gate, while the perishing inhabitants of a world are rushing to the banquet of the Lamb. The angel, flying through the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, will publish it to every kindred and nation and tongue and people. This angel is the gospel ministry, and this prediction is fast accomplishing.

Will any ask, What has all this to do with the present occasion ? The answer is obvious. You have met to lay the foundation of an institution, designed to recruit the ranks of the gospel ministry. There are many who would become soldiers of the cross, if any would equip

them. The subscribers to this generous fund, and the founders of this noble edifice, have in view this single object. It is an institution, in some respects, like no other that ever rose ; designed to bestow gratis a liberal education upon those who will enter the gospel ministry, but who are too indigent to defray the expense of their own induction. It has been founded and must rise by charity. And every man who shall bring a beam or a rock, who shall lay a stone or drive a nail, from love to the kingdom of Christ, shall not fail of his reward. I believe this institution will collect about it the friends of the Lord Jesus, who will be fed by their philanthropy and watered by their prayers, and will yet become a fountain pouring forth its streams to fertilize the boundless wastes of a miserable world. In vision I see it among the first institutions of our land, the younger sister and the best friend of our theological seminaries, the centre of our education societies, the solace of poverty, the joy of the destitute, and the hope and the salvation of perishing millions.*

Connected as it is with the recruit of the ministry, the salvation of souls, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, it will rise, and will soon have a claim upon the charity, the prayers, and the tears of the whole Christian community. If some who may aid in the work have other motives than the glory of God, still I will hope, and I *do believe*, that the great mass of the donors, have their eye upon the future glories of Emmanuel, and are erecting this institution as a monument to his honour. And having put their hand to the plough, they will not look back. They will still enlarge their charities, and increase their hopes, till this sacred spot, where they are

* We are happy to say that this prediction has been fulfilled long before this time.

erecting the school, has attracted the gaze, and gladdened the aching hearts of believers in every destitute section of our land.

The subject now makes its appeal to all classes of men, to all the tender relationships of life, and to all the sympathies of human nature. Its first appeal is *to the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.* They are the sacred depositaries of divine truth, and are obligated to perpetuate the ministry of reconciliation. Here you may educate your children, born in your late revivals, and committed to your care to train up for the Lord. Here you see revived the hope and the promise of your future prosperity. "Thy children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Here we hope will be educated many of your future pastors. You have here an additional pledge, that God has not forsaken you, and that he will never leave the vine he has planted in this western world, to be trodden down by the boar of the wood, or wasted by the lapse of time, or the ravages of death. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

And *congregations* have a singular interest. You have had just occasion to fear that you might one day become waste places, through a lack of pastors. But the thought must be dreadful, whether you regard a *future* life, or only the *present.* When the lips which now address you in your respective sanctuaries, are cold in death, and you are met to pay the last offices of affection to your deceased pastors, how it would darken the glooms of that evening, and lessen your hopes of salvation, to apprehend a famine of the word. But the most judicious, till the church waked to the duty of educating herself a ministry, feared all this. The increase of our

population, and the urgent claims of the heathen and the destitute, seemed to leave us, till we discovered this remedy, nothing to look for but ultimate desertion and ruin. For with the gospel, it was known there would desert us the Sabbath and all those institutions which are the glory of our land. Even the very infidel, who has no hope for himself and his children beyond the grave, but would have them civil, and decent, and wealthy, and happy in the present life, has a deep interest in this institution.

But the subject addresses itself specially to *believers*. You love the Lord Jesus Christ, and love his church, and have a deep interest in whatever has respect to his honour. And the eternal life of souls is near your heart. If this institution then promises to promote either of these objects, it will be dear to your hearts. And you know the ministry is appointed for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Of course an institution designed to enlarge this ministry, is connected intimately with your best interests, your highest pleasures, and your richest hopes. And as you shall see its walls rise, we shall presume on your co-operation and your prayers.

The inhabitants of this whole *vicinity* have a deep interest in this institution. It will not *confine* its blessings to you, but it will offer you its benefits with the fewest inconveniences. If God has given your children his grace, you have here an opportunity to educate them at your own threshold. And if you are too poor to purchase the privilege, still this institution opens to you its doors. Nor is the thought to be despised, that here there will be collected those who have an interest at the throne of grace, and whose daily supplications must bring a blessing upon the whole vicinity.

To *parents* this subject cannot want interest. If there should be no prospect that our own children be here prepared for usefulness, still the institution will stand, we trust, when our bodies have mouldered in the grave, and be a nursery for our children's children down through many generations. In an age like this, pregnant with such high and holy promise to the rising generation, it is a blessing to be a parent. We may have higher hopes than any age that has gone by, that God will pour out his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring.

The *friends of correct sentiment* will rejoice to see a school of the prophets opened among a people who believe the truth, and in a neighbourhood where there is a pious and orthodox ministry, where prevail the doctrines of our forefathers, and where the assurance is so strong, that these same funds shall never be perverted from their original design. We have seen error attempting to roll its desolating flood through our churches. We have seen prostituted to the vile purpose of disseminating false doctrines, funds that were consecrated to the interests of truth. We have seen the Redeemer degraded to a mere attribute, an angel, a man and even a sinner, by the very charities that were intended to give him a throne in every heart, and an altar in every house. We have seen fountains, opened by the liberality of a pious ancestry, so poisoned, that every stream they issued carried sterility and death through the provinces they were designed to fertilize. Next to the grace of God, and relying on his blessing, the best means of cleansing those waters, or damming these streams, is to prepare for the churches a full supply of scribes well instructed in the kingdom of God. And the hope could hardly be stronger, that the funds here deposited for that

purpose, will be forever held sacred to the design for which they were consecrated.

The *poor* will feel a special interest in every transaction relative to this institution. The fund subscribed is exclusively for them, and can never be diverted from their use. Here then is one institution where envy can have no employ. The rich would not be willing that the Christian public should educate *their* children, they would prefer to *purchase* the benefit. Once it was said, "To the poor the gospel is *preached*," now the poor may become qualified to *preach* the gospel. They may dispense the blessings which it has been their province to receive, may teach where it was their privilege to learn, may become *beneficiaries* to an extent that shall qualify them to become *benefactors*. Here, if you cannot educate your own children, and God has given them his grace, and they are otherwise qualified, you may send them to live by the temple and feed upon its offerings, till they are prepared to be prophets in Israel. O it must carry hope and joy into the habitations of poverty to day, to know that there is laid the foundation of an institution, destined to pour its blessings exclusively upon the indigent! This is a blessing that has lain so beyond their hopes as to have hardly been an object of their prayers. Before they have called God has answered. Hence, to the full extent of their power they will pour into this fund the little streams of their charity, and will watch the progress of its rising honours and its growing interests with paternal fondness and solicitude.

Nor will the rich have any feelings but those of pleasure. All other institutions have opened their doors to them, while this one, which promises promotion to the children of their poorer neighbours, will receive their patronage and their prayers. Nor can they know but

their posterity may be poor, and one day hang their last hope on the promised aid of this kind and benevolent institution.

I cannot suppress my wish to recommend this institution to the patronage of *females*. They have recently signalized themselves as the friends of religion and of the gospel ministry. Many an ambassador of the cross owes his courage and his success, to their charities and their prayers. Here they will have opportunity, I hope, to see some of their noblest wishes gratified. Here they may consecrate their charities, and toward this place may turn their eye when they pray, and find their spirits cheered, their prayers answered, and their hopes accomplished. In the zeal they show for these objects, they evince that they know how to appreciate their own comforts. The gospel, in addition to the promise of eternal life, renders them free, respected, and happy, in the life that now is.

This institution has a claim upon the *patriot*. No country is so blessed as when science and religion blend their influences, and shower upon society their united blessing. But this school, more than any other, will tend to that balance of influence, and approximate us toward that equality, which is ever the basis of a government like ours. It will raise the poor, widen the bonds of affection, and vastly increase the amount of happiness. We hope to enlist in this benevolent design the whole aggregate of patriotism within the compass of its influence.

The *ministers of Christ* will say, God speed, to an enterprise calculated to increase the labourers in the vineyard. We shall thus give evidence to the world, that all we say respecting the scarcity of ministers we fully believe; for if things were otherwise, we could not act

more unwisely for our own interest than to thus raise up rivals, who might rob us of our parishes and our bread. How it must gladden our aged fathers, to see an institution rise, designed to prolong the cry of glad tidings, which begins to die away upon their palsied lips. When they can address sinners no more, and can only cast an eye over the valley of vision and survey the vast fields of the slain, it will rejoice their hearts to see other prophets taking their stand by the side of that valley, intending to prolong the prophecy till the dry bones have become living men. When the aged Elisha went with the young prophets to the banks of Jordan, to cheer them in their toils, and aid them with his counsels and his prayers, he showed a strong regard to the future welfare of Israel, and deeply engraved his memory upon the hearts of the young prophets. Unless I greatly mistake the feelings of my aged fathers, their eyes will be bright with joy while they see these walls go up. They will fall on their knees, and spread their hands toward heaven, and give us their dying blessing ; and may their prayer return into their own bosom.

If now, in my concluding remarks, I should address you as *Christians*, I would say. This institution, if permitted to rise, (and we look to *God* for this permission,) and if not grossly perverted from its original design, is connected intimately with the dispersion of that Egyptian darkness which has so long brooded over an apostate world ; with all that is interesting in the rescue of the idolater from his gods, the Papist from his relics and his saints, the Jew from his Talmud, the Mahometan from his Koran, the African from his chains, and the assassin from his pistol and his knife. You have enlightened views of your Maker, have a Bible, a sabbath, and a sanctuary, can feast at the table of the Lord, and entertain

hopes of a rich and happy immortality. I plead for those who are immortal like you, and like you must die, and be judged, but have never learned the true character of God, nor heard the story of a Saviour, nor have discovered any escape from the glooms of the sepulchre; who look to that home as the seat of perpetual darkness, forgetfulness and silence; who have never kept a day of rest, and can hope to remit their toils their cares and their miseries, only when their heads shall slumber on the turf. Religion would make them as happy as you, and heaven as blessed.

But I do not appeal exclusively to *piety*, but to *all the tender feelings of humanity*. When you cast your eye over the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty, every aspect of wretchedness which you descry gives importance to the transactions of this day. We plead for the unhappy, for the lost, and the miserable. I think I see, without the aid of inspiration, a band of missionaries, educated in this school, issuing forth to chase misery from this polluted world.

You are a father, are loved by your children, and cherished with that tenderness which your infirmities and your age require; we plead for fathers, who in their declining years are deserted by their children, and left to perish by the frosts of age, who are borne to the bed of some river, that they may be swept away by the tide, and become the food of the shark or the alligator.

You are a mother, and perhaps a widow, and your children would shrink from no sacrifice that might prolong your life, or soothe your pains or your cares; I plead for mothers whose offspring are monsters, and can force them at the point of the spear upon the flames that are consuming the corpse of a husband, and can drown their dying shrieks in acclamations of infernal joy.

You was left in your infancy an orphan, and have found in this inhospitable world a guardian and a friend, who has nursed your childhood, and watched your youth, and reared you to respectable and promising manhood; I plead for orphans, who have no home but in the place of sculls, no house but the house of silence where sleep the ashes of a merciless mother, no friend but death, who stops the rage of hunger, blunts the edge of care, extinguishes the fire of affection and hope, and finds the wretched a covert and a calm amid the clods of the valley.

If the relief of miseries like these has the least connection with the events of this day, these events will have *some* claim upon the sympathy of every feeling heart. If we might only hope, that by means of this institution, *one more missionary*, than would otherwise be educated, will enter the fields of labor, and go to some *one province* of this dark world, and there create a light that shall guide home to heaven *one benighted soul*, it would be worth all the pains and the wealth that shall be expended in founding this school. "The redemption of the soul is precious and it ceaseth forever." You might cover that field with silver and gold, and if the whole would buy off one soul from perdition it would be well expended. And I must believe that more than *one missionary* will be sent, and more than *one sinner be redeemed*, by the means that are here providing; and in the boundless joys thus generated, shall find all the reward I wish, for any plea I can offer, or any exertions I can make, to advance this interest.

If we are utterly mistaken, and any feel otherwise, we rejoice that the field of labour is large. They may glorify God in some other way, may feed the poor, disperse the Scriptures, support the missionaries already

educated, or educate *others* in some *other school.* Or if any will neither aid this charity nor any other, and their consciences will approve of their neutrality, they shall receive no reproach from us if they do nothing. If we are disposed to do good, and our motive is the glory of God, it will ill become us to reproach others. To their own master they stand or fall.

In the mean time, I hope that those who cannot conscientiously labour with us, will utter no reproaches, nor make any effort to dam the streams of charity that might flow to this centre, and issue hence to carry their fertilizing influence through the wastes of this miserable world. If once the object was good, it is so still. If unhappily some may not have had in view the divine glory in their most zealous efforts, still the character of the institution is not changed, nor its importance diminished, nor its claims cancelled. I close with one remark to the friends of this institution.

How important is it, that we suitably prize and improve the ministry established among us. What will it avail us that we have pitied the destitute, and the heathen, if at last we die impenitent, and sink below them in perdition. We may send them the Bible and the ambassador of peace, and still neglect that book and that ministry, and die unsanctified. The ministry can be a blessing to the heathen, only as it may become the means of their conversion; hence to feel anxious for them, and found an institution with a view to furnish them a ministry, and yet under the full advantages of that ministry live without God and without Christ in the world, is to act with unpardonable disregard of our first, best duty. It would be a fearful event, if finally we should lift up our voice and weep, and say, "My mother's children made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine

own vineyard have I not kept." Each of us has a soul that must live forever, that must be washed in a Savior's blood, or must endure the terrors of his wrath ; to save this soul is our first concern, and we may wake to its interests too late. If we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, and yet lack that charity to which salvation is promised, we should die fools at the last. It is true that the religion of the gospel is benevolent ; it is true that the covetous man is an idolater, and has not eternal life abiding in him, but there is also a religion which all evaporates in care for the safety of others, which has little to do with the closet, or the heart, or the Bible, or heaven. O let this day bring us all to our knees. Let the walls of this edifice be bedewed with the tears of repentance, and may we all be pillars or polished stones in the mystical temple, which Christ is erecting, that when the top-stone is laid we may be there to aid the shout, Grace, grace unto it. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

[It is the opinion and the grief of many, that the excellent sermons, and other writings, of President Edwards, are too much neglected by the churches of the present day, and that the principal cause of that neglect is to be attributed to the style in which his pungency of thought is communicated. Hence the attempt to put this sermon in other language as an experiment. The difficulty of the task none will doubt, who shall undertake a single page. If the attempt should fail, still nothing is lost, and much may be gained if it should induce some other person to do, *more successfully*, what the author conceives practicable and important.]

SERMON LVIII.

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD.

Deut. xxxii. 35.

Their foot shall slide in due time.

God here threatens the unbelieving Israelites, who enjoyed abundantly the means of grace, and saw the wonderful works of God, yet remained void of counsel, and brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit.

The threatening implies, in the *first* place, that they were always exposed to destruction. One who stands on a slippery place, may fall at any moment. He whose foot may slide, has placed it where his standing is perpetually insecure. The Psalmist uses a like figure, "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

The threatening implies, again, that they were always exposed to *sudden* and *unexpected* destruction. He who walks in slippery places has no warning when he must fall, but feels as perfectly secure the instant before he falls as at any previous moment. So the Psalmist, after exhibiting the sinner as standing in slippery places, adds, "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment."

It is also implied that they fall *of themselves*. Their own weight will cast them down, if no power extraneous be applied to aid their fall.

It is further implied, that the reason why they have

not fallen, is that God's appointed time is not come. In *due time* their foot shall slide. God will then employ his power no longer to sustain them, and their own weight will bring them down. At that very juncture when God shall resolve no longer to hold them up, they go down into destruction.

Let these remarks be applied to sinners in every age, *and they will thus apply;* and we have this doctrine, *It is the mere pleasure of God that keeps wicked men out of hell a moment.* The sovereign will of God, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no difficulty, prevents them from going to their own place. The truth of this observation will appear from the following considerations.

I. *There is no want of power in God to destroy wicked men at any moment.* No arm has any power of resistance when God rises up. None can deliver out of his hands. He can not only destroy, but he can do it *most easily.* An earthly prince may find it difficult to subdue a rebel. He may fortify himself, and gather round his standard a multitude of daring adherents. But no fortress can make any resistance to the power of God. The enemies of God may combine and associate, but they are easily broken to pieces. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." They are but as the chaff before the whirlwind, or the stubble before devouring flames.

It is easy to tread upon and crush a worm, or sunder a thread, and just so easily can God cast down into a hopeless perdition a multitude of his enemies. At his rebuke the earth trembles, and rocks are rent; what then can man do when he would resist God?

II. *Sinners every moment deserve destruction.* Divine justice will make no resistance whenever God shall

please to show his wrath. Indeed justice perpetually demands their blood. Of the vine that brings forth the grapes of Sodom, justice says, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground." The sword of justice is perpetually brandished over the heads of the ungodly, and only arbitrary mercy prevents it from being bathed in their blood.

III. *Sinners are under sentence of condemnation to everlasting misery.* They not only justly deserve to be cast down to hell, but the sentence of the divine law, the immutable rule of righteousness, has gone out against them, and stands against them. They are evermore bound over to perdition. "He that believeth not is condemned already." Hence every unconverted man belongs to hell, it is his own place. "Ye are from beneath." Thither the broken law has sentenced sinners and the law is unchangeable.

IV. *Sinners are even now the objects of that very same wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell.* The reason why they do not perish at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not even as angry with them, as he is with those who are now feeling the fierceness of his wrath. Yes, God is *more* angry with many who are yet spared, yea, doubtless, with many in this assembly, who are quite at ease, than with some who are lost.

It is not then that God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand upon them and cut them off. He is not as they imagine altogether such a one as themselves. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation slumbers not; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the flames even now rage, ready to receive them. The glit-

tering sword is whetted and held over them. Mercy cries spare them ; justice is ready to destroy them.

V. *The grand adversary stands ready to torment them, soon as God shall permit.* They belong to him, he has them in his possession, and under his dominion. "Ye are of your father the devil." He ever watches wicked men, has them at his right hand, is waiting to devour them, as a lion hungry for his prey. Let God only withdraw restraint from the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, and he would become the executioner of divine wrath in a moment. Hell opens its mouth wide to receive sinners, and if God only permit, they are all swallowed up and lost in a moment.

VI. *There are reigning in wicked men those infernal principles, that would immediately create a hell in their bosoms, but for the restraints that God imposes.* In the very nature of the carnal mind, there is laid a foundation for the torments of hell. Its miseries are indeed begun already in the hearts of the unsanctified. The principles of depravity are active and powerful, and would from their violence, were it not for God's restraints, break out into an immediate and open perdition, as the same corruptions do in the hearts of the damned. The souls of the wicked are like the troubled sea, but God restrains them as he does the foaming billows, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther." And whenever that strong barrier is removed, there will ensue a fearful and a wide-spread destruction. Sin produces the misery, and is the destroyer of the soul. To effect the ruin of its possessor is its very nature, and needs no helper in order to produce complete destruction. The corruption of the heart is immoderate and boundless in its fury. It is a fire pent up by divine restraint, and will kindle into conflagration the whole course of nature, when God shall

permit. The heart is a dark sink of sin, a fiery oven, where are all the materials of torment, whenever they shall be once kindled.

VII. *It is no security to wicked men one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand.* Present good health is no security. One may go out of the world by accident, and that even when danger may seem the most remote. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows that the best health, and the fairest prospects of life, are no evidence that men are not on the very brink of eternity, ready to launch the next step into the perdition they deserve. The innumerable, and inconceivable ways and means of terminating life, should forever impress the fact of its uncertainty. Impenitent men walk over the burning pit, on a rotten covering, a covering in many places too weak to sustain them, but that God holds them back from the danger that awaits them. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon day, and the sharpest human sight cannot descry them. God has an infinite variety of means by which to accomplish the purposes of his wrath, whenever he is ready to execute them. He need be at no expense, need work no miracle, nor go out of his ordinary course of providence, to send the wicked to hell at any moment. And the means of their ruin are all in the hands of God, and so absolutely subject to his power and his will, that sinners are as much exposed as if God uniformly destroyed without means.

VIII. *Sinners can exercise no care or prudence that can secure their lives a moment.* To this fact, universal experience, and the passing events of divine providence, bear their united and irresistable testimony. Were it otherwise we should see the wise and discerning laying their plans for long life, and they would so con-

trive, if wealth and wisdom united could do it, as to prolong their stay in this world beyond all their fellows. But these men often die the first, and usually with their plans so laid that death greatly surprises them, and often fatally destroys their interest as well as their souls. "How dieth the wise man? As the fool."

IX. *All the efforts of wicked men to escape hell, while they reject Christ, are of not the least avail to keep them out of perdition a moment.* Every man who has heard of hell, flatters himself on making his escape from its torments. But he depends on himself, on what he has done, is doing, or intends to do, as the medium of his escape from the wrath to come. Every man so lays his plan, as to secure himself, and is flattered with the belief that his plan is good. They hear that there are but few saved, and know the probability that the greater part of the present generations go to perdition. But each sinner intends to be among the few that are saved. He does not mean to go to the place of torment. He purposes that his care for the soul shall be effectual, and heaven shall be secured.

But men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and trust finally in a mere shadow. The greater part who have lived under the same means of grace have undoubtedly gone to perdition. And they did not perish because they were not as wise as sinners now are, not because they did not think of an escape, and contrive for it, as men now do. Could we speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected when alive, and used to hear of hell, to be one day the subjects of that misery, we should doubtless hear them reply one by one, No, No, I never intended to come here. I had calculated far otherwise in my own mind. I thought I

had contrived well for myself. I thought my scheme good, but death came upon me, and hell, unexpectedly. I was not looking for destruction at that time, and in that manner. It came like a thief in the night. Death outwitted me. The wrath of God was too quick for me. O my accursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself, with vain dreams, of what I would do to save my soul. And while I was saying, peace and safety, sudden destruction came upon me.

X. *God has not laid himself under obligation, by promise or otherwise, to keep wicked men out of misery a moment.* No promise of God gives them eternal life, or secures them from eternal death, but what is contained in the covenant of grace. It is in Jesus Christ that the promises are all yea and amen. But unsanctified men have no interests in the promises of the covenant. They are not children of the covenant, do not believe the *promises* of the covenant, and have no interest in the *Mediator* of the covenant.

Hence whatever some may have imagined or pretended respecting the promises, as made to the seekings and knockings of the unregenerate, it is plain that whatever pains they may take in religion, or whatever prayers they may offer, till Christ is believed in, God is under no manner of obligation to keep them a moment from eternal destruction.

Thus men who do not love God are suspended upon uncovenanted mercy. They have deserved perdition, and are sentenced to it, and God is provoked enough with them to destroy them, even as much as toward many who have perished, and they have done nothing to appease or abate that anger, nor is God in the least obligated to them by promise or otherwise. The grand foe is waiting for them, and hell moving from beneath to

meet them at their coming, and its fires already kindled in their bosom, and ready to burst out into a consuming and quenchless conflagration; and no interest in a Mediator, and no means within their reach that can be any security against a speedy and hopeless perdition. Sinners have no refuge, nothing to stand on, and nothing to take hold of. They are kept out of endless torment by the uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of a holy God, who has been long incensed with their multiplied iniquities, and is unchangeably at enmity with their polluted characters.

APPLICATION.

The very nature of this subject shows to whom it is especially applicable. It belongs to the whole mass of unregenerate men. You see the forlorn condition in which the gospel finds you. The world of misery is extended broad under you. The glowing flames of the wrath of God are all ready to kindle upon you. Thus a deep and wide perdition yawns beneath you, and you have nothing to stand upon or take hold of. The thin air only separates you from the fire that shall never be quenched, and the worm that shall never die. The power of God holds you up, and his uncovenanted pleasure sustains you.

But of all this you may have no proper sense. You find you are held up, and do not see the hand that holds you. You rely on your good constitution, on the care that you take of your life, and the means used to render it prolonged and happy. But all these things are nothing, if God should withdraw his hand, and would avail no more to hold you back from the place of torment, than mere air to stop a falling rock.

Your wickedness makes you tend downward, with a

weight and a pressure like solid lead. God has only to let you go, and quick as thought, you descend to the bottomless gulf, your good health, and sound constitution, and care, and prudence notwithstanding. Your wisdom and your righteousness would have no more influence to hold you back from the doom you deserve, than the spider's web. Were it not that such is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not sustain you a moment, you are a burden to it, the creation groans with you. We are assured, that the creature was made subject to the bondage of your corruptions, not willingly. The sun does not cheerfully light you in the broad way, nor the earth willingly yield you her increase, to satisfy your lusts, or become willingly the theatre of your crimes, nor does the air willingly serve you for breath, to maintain the flame of life, while that life is not devoted to God. All the creatures of God are good, and were made to be the instruments of his praise, and while they are used for any other purpose, are forced out of their element, and groan being burdened. The world is ready to vomit forth you and your sins, and be no longer polluted with your base affections, and your misdeeds. The tempests of divine wrath, hang over your heads, full of relentless fire, and thunder, and tornado, all ready to break forth upon you at God's bidding. It is the sovereign pleasure of God that stays his rough wind, or it would bear down upon you with fury, and your destruction would come as a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

As waters dammed up, increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given, and the longer stopped, the more rapid and overwhelming its course, so is the anger of God. He has not speedily executed jugdment upon your evil work ; the floods of his ven-

geance have been withheld, but your guilt in the mean time has perpetually increased, you are every day treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; but when at length this accumulated mischief shall burst upon your head, there is none can tell the doleful tale of your ruin. Let God only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate that stays the terrors of your destruction, and there pours forth, with inconceivable power, a stream of wrath, which the stoutest man, with his strength doubled a hundred times, or the sturdiest devil, could do nothing to withstand or endure.

And how comfortless then to the sinner all this delay! It augers nothing to his ultimate advantage. The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and aimed at his heart; and but the mere pleasure of God, an offended, insulted, long abused God; a God, whom no promise or obligation has bound, holds back the arrow from being drunk with his blood.

Thus is it with all in this assembly who have not passed a great change wrought by the Spirit of God, all that have not been born again, been made new creatures, been raised from darkness and death to light and life in Jesus Christ, you are all in the hands of an angry God; your reformed life, and your religious affections, your family and closet prayers, and hypocritical sanctuary devotions, all notwithstanding. The sovereign pleasure of a God angry with you keeps you from perdition. And if not convinced of this truth now, you will be fully convinced not long first. Those who were once in your circumstances remember how it was with them, that they would not believe till destruction came suddenly upon them. Now they see that they leaned upon a straw, upon mere air, upon a shadow.

And what is a truth of awful import, the God that

holds sinners up from perdition, as one holds a loathsome insect over the glowing embers, is angry with them, is fearfully provoked, his anger burns like fire. He views you as fit for nothing else but to suffer in honour of his law. He is of purer eyes than to bear you long in his sight. He sees no such deformity elsewhere as he sees in you, not even in the most loathsome serpent. No rebel ever offended his prince as you have offended God, and still his own kind hand holds you back from the doom you deserve. To nothing else can it be ascribed that you went not to the place of torment the last night, that you waked from sleep this morning, that you have not perished since you waked, and that you do not this moment quit us to go to the world of misery. The iniquities of your hearts, while you sit here under the sound of the gospel rejecting a Saviour, constantly tempt him to abandon you forever.

O sinner! consider the danger you are in. The perdition that yawns beneath you is wide and bottomless, and the God who holds you up from it is fearfully incensed against you, even as he is against those who have gone to suffer their doom. The moment will come, and may while I am speaking, that shall see the thread sundered that sustains you. And you no interest in a Mediator, no hiding place, nothing to lay hold of to prevent your fall, nothing to appease the divine indignation, nothing that you have done, nothing that you *are doing*, nothing that you *can do*. Your whole interest is at hazard, and your soul at hazard.

Let me suggest four thoughts respecting the wrath you are in danger of, and I have done.

1. Whose wrath it is. *It is the wrath of the infinite God.* Were it merely the wrath of man, though of the most powerful prince, it would be comparatively nothing.

The wrath of a king is dreadful, especially of an absolute monarch, who has the possessions and the lives of his subjects wholly in his power. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." He who very much enrages an arbitrary prince may suffer the greatest torments that human art can invent, or human power inflict. But the greatest potentate, in his greatest strength, and clothed in his fiercest terrors, is a feeble despicable worm compared with the King of kings. A mere man can do but little, when most enraged, and when he puts forth all his might. But the wrath of God is as much more terrible as his majesty is greater. "And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, But I will forwarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him."

2. Not only is it the wrath of God, but *the fierceness of his wrath* to which you are exposed. We read you know of the fury of God. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries." And again we read, "Behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire."

So we read of his fierceness. We are told of "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." What an awful climax is here. Not merely have we *the wrath of God*, though this would have been infinitely dreadful, but *the fierceness and wrath of God*, and it adds again, *the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*. How dreadful must that be! Who can utter, or even conceive what such expressions carry with them. It would seem as though there will be a very

great manifestation of the power of the great God in the overthrow of sinners, as though Omnipotence should be enraged and exerted, as men are wont to put forth their strength when infuriated. O then what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong, and whose heart endure! To what inconceivable depths of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this inexpressible torment!

Consider this all ye that are unregenerate, when God shall execute the fierceness of his anger, there will be wrath without pity. When God shall behold the extremity of your case, and see that your torment is wholly disproportioned to your strength, and see your poor soul crushed and sinking into incurable gloom and despair; he will have no compassion upon you, nor forbear the execution of his wrath, nor lighten his hand. There will be no moderation or mercy, nor will God stay his rough wind. He can then have no regard to your welfare, nor care how much you suffer, so that you do not endure more than you deserve, and will withhold nothing, merely because it is hard for you to bear. "Therefore will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." God now stands ready to pity, this is a day of mercy, you may cry with the hope of being heard. But let the day of grace pass, and all your lamentations, your cries, and shrieks will be in vain. You will then be lost, and thrown away, and God have nothing to do with you, but to make you a perpetual sufferer. You will be continued in being for no other purpose, will be a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, and the vessel will be of no other use but to be filled with wrath. God will be so far from pitying you,

that he will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.

How awful are those words of the great God, "I will tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." What words can more plainly declare contempt, hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God, he will but tread you under his feet, and although he will know that you cannot endure the awful weight, he will tread upon you without mercy, till your blood shall gush out and stain his raiment. He will not only hate you, but will have you in the utmost contempt. He will think no place fit for you but under his feet, to be trodden down like the mire of the streets.

3. God will thus afflict you *that he may show his wrath.* God has it in his heart to show to angels and to men, both how excellent his love is, and how terrible his wrath is. Earthly kings have sometimes a mind to show the terrors of their wrath, by the punishments they inflict upon their foes. The Chaldean monarch was willing to show his wrath in the punishment of Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego, and he gave orders to heat the burning fiery furnace seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated. It was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness, so that it slew the men who cast them in. So the great God is willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty in the extreme suffering of his enemies. "What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" It being his design to show how terrible his unmixed wrath is, he will do it to effect. The accomplishment of what God has said against the wicked will be dreadful. When

he has risen up, and done his will on the poor lost being, and the wretch is actually suffering the weight of his indignation, then will he summon the universe to come, and see how awful is his majesty, and how mighty his power. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Hear, ye that are afar off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings."

Thus shall it be with you who shall remain unconverted. In the ineffable terrors of your ruin, there will be displayed the might, and the majesty, and the terribleness of the Omnipotent God. You will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in all your sufferings, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall come and look upon the awful spectacle, and learn what is the wrath and fierceness of Almighty God, and when they have looked they will fall down and adore his power and majesty, "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. *It is everlasting wrath.* It would be dreadful to suffer the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God *one moment*, but sinners must suffer it *forever*. There will be no end to your plagues. When you look forward you will see before you a long forever, and will despair of having deliverance, mitigation, or rest through

this whole amazing futurity. You will know certainly that you must wear out millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with matchless vengeance. And when these ages are gone, you will see them to be but a point of time to what remains. Endless misery! Oh, who can describe the horrid circumstances of a ruined soul? What one can say on such a subject, is all feebleness compared with the reality. "Who knows the power of his anger?"

How inconceivably dreadful is the state of those who are daily and hourly in danger of this wrath and misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation who is not born of God, be his morals ever so strict, and sober, and religious. O that you would consider it whether you be old or young! Many who are present will probably be the subjects of this very misery through eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they have. They are perhaps at their ease, and hear all this without being in the least disturbed. They are saying to themselves, It is not I, I shall escape. Did we know that there was one person, and but one in this whole congregation, who is to be the subject of all this misery, how should we all gaze with anguish upon him! how should we raise over him our loud and bitter cry! Ah one! no doubt there are many present who will think of this sermon in hell, and some perhaps in a very few days, or *months* at farthest. Ah calculate not on months, for notwithstanding your health and quiet, and security, hell may have become your home ere the sun shall rise once more.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALEXANDRIAN SOCIETY

OF

AMHERST COLLEGE,

AUGUST 21, 1827.

AN ADDRESS.

THE INFLUENCE OF A GOOD TASTE UPON THE MORAL AFFECTIONS.

The question has been often asked, whether this is a deformed or a beautiful world; whether it came from the hand of its Maker *in its present aspect*, or has been marred and defaced by some mighty disaster. Men have had on this subject widely different opinions. One has seen nothing in which this world is defective; no mountain he would have levelled, no valley he would raise, no rock he would bury, no marsh he would drain, no heath he would fertilize, no morass he would redeem. Another has seen, or thought he saw deformity every where, and has in many a gloomy hour responded to that moan of the poet, uttered in view of the first transgression:

> "Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo,
> That all was lost."

To him it has seemed, that in every hill and vale and ocean and lake and heath and river there is some curse to be deplored. Others again have discovered on the face of this world many beauties, which must have been designed as such by its Creator; while yet they see deformities, which indicate, that when Jehovah rested from his work he left this world not as it now is, and which bespeak some convulsion, by which its distortions

have been generated, and much of its original beauty lost. Some of its most elevated ridges wear the marks of having risen from the ocean, while the presumption is, that what were once its mountains are now buried in the depths of the sea.

That the earth has been swept over by some deluge passing from north to south, is too obvious to admit of a doubt. But whether the event, happen when or how it might, finally left the surface of the world *deformed* or *beautiful*, may still be a question to be decided, very differently perhaps, by our different tastes. One man will see deformity in some cases where another sees only beauty. It may even be questioned, whether men of equally improved tastes will invariably agree in what is beautiful, and what deformed in the sceneries of nature. One may have a taste only for what is *plain*, and another for what is *splendid*. One may be most gratified when in his landscape there are seen the barren rock, and the broken cliff; while another, who can be pleased only with what is useful, must see every spot fertile, have every rock concealed, and every eminence accessible. Which of these have the best taste, is a question on which ingenuity might employ itself most elegantly, and not without profit.

Whether taste should be denominated an internal sense, or judgment operating without any perceptible process of reasoning, is of small moment; for whatever difficulties there may be in defining, there is none in understanding it. "Taste," says an elegant writer, "is of all nature's gifts the most easily felt, and the most difficult to explain; it would not be what it is, if it could be defined; for it judges of objects beyond the reach of jugdment, and serves in a manner as a magnifying glass to reason." I have supposed it not wide from the truth

to say, that taste is a sense of the understanding, holding much the same relation to objects of nature and art, that conscience, another sense, holds to moral objects. As one has been defined, " The power of receiving pleasure or pain from the beauties or deformities of nature and of art ;" so the other, may be termed, the power of receiving pleasure or pain from moral beauty or deformity. Hence, to trace the resemblance a little farther, as there may be a vitiated conscience that shall approve of the most abominable deeds, so there may be a vitiated taste that is pleased with what is beyond doubt a deformity. I am aware that this remark however involves the question, whether there is any standard of taste founded in the principles of the human constitution, or whether casual association is to account for all our notions in matters of taste.

But leaving all these questions to men of more leisure, I propose to enquire, *whether a cultivated taste exerts a favourable influence upon the moral affections.* I have supposed the affirmative of this question capable of the fullest proof, and that the discussion of it would lead to a great variety of practical and important remarks suited to this occasion. I would say then, in the

First place, That a cultivated taste tends to soothe and restrain the unruly and turbulent passions. I venture to assert, that, the religion of Jesus Christ excepted, there is no power that can operate upon the passions more effectually than such a taste. The mind that is under its plastic influence will naturally be led to dwell on objects that excite the better emotions, the soft and tender, or the grand and sublime ; is withdrawn from vexatious care, and led to retirement and reflection; and the result of all this is tranquillity. And the mind thus occupied will not so readily seek enjoyments that are forbidden.

In all parts of the creation there are beauties or sublimities by which a good taste is gratified. Above are the hosts of heaven, the sun going forth in his strength, the moon walking in brightness, and the uncounted stars decorating the whole expanse. As we descend to earth, we find it clothed in beauties too permanent to suffer any power but that which spake them into being to erase them. Hence to a cultivated taste there are every where sources of enjoyment, calculated to supplant the rougher affections, and generate and mature those that are kind and lovely: and the mind that is innocently happy is not so easily disturbed by temptations.

What evil passion can rage uncontrolled at a moment when the mind is happy in enjoyments which God has not forbidden: happy in the works of his own hands. The mind thus occupied will be urged to the reflection of the poet,

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty, thine this universal frame,
> Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!"

And what power has any forbidden object to attract or control a mind so employed? *Envy*, for instance, what place can it have? A good taste enjoys what is another's. It cares not whose is the landscape, or the palace, or the tastefully cultivated garden. It waits not to ask what interest accrues to self from the fertility, the order, the convenience, the harmony, or variety which it sees and admires. It covets not to call the stars its own, nor the brook that winds down the valley, nor the fruits and foliage that cover the hills. The *stranger* no less than the *propietor*, may inhale the fragance, and hear the music, and feel the harmony that breathes about him,

The man of taste realizes to some extent the rich experience of the child of God;

> "He looks abroad into the varied field
> Of nature, and, though poor perhaps compared
> With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
> Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
> His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
> And the resplendent rivers."
> * * * * * *
> Yes, ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
> The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good,
> In senseless riot."

But there are men that have "a richer use of yours than you." The man of cultivated taste owns all he sees. The cottage on the hill, and the flocks that feed about it, and the woodbine that creeps it over, and the house-birds that build their nests there, are all the instruments of his gratification. Nature, with all its original scenery, and art with all its varied improvements, are so much the property and inheritance of a good taste, that envy can hardly find entrance.

Covetousness a kindred passion will be restrained by the same means. A good taste can leave others in possession of what is theirs, satisfied with the power of enjoying what *is not* as well as what *is* its own. It is like the lark, which can soar amid the heavens, and may light and drink at any brook, and gather its food on any field, and cares not to call the territory its own.

I even venture to say, that the *angry passions* are restrained by the same means. These are more likely to have their abode in minds that have never travelled from home, nor been expanded by cultivation; and are produced by a contractedness and a jealousy as mean as mischievous; deformities which a good taste, as well as a right temper, reprobates as coarse, unsightly and repulsive.

The harsh language, and the coarse rebuke, and the distorted countenance, and the whole apparatus of malevolence are, to a good taste, grating beyond endurance.

I have not meant to say, nor have I said, that an improved taste will wholly subdue these passions; but that it may be the ally of piety. We have always seen the rougher passions, and an uncultivated taste in the same household, and associated by the same fireside. Can you not know something of the family by the avenue to their habitation? When you see it all deformity without; unsightliness, and disproportion, and inconvenience; can you not trace, many times, a similar roughness of moral aspect, in its uncultivated tenants? While the mind acts upon every thing about it, there is, from every thing about it, a reaction upon the mind. I know there are cases when we discover what is kind in the midst of unsightliness and deformity. We have sometimes found true religion where there is little else. It is not denied that the grace of God may achieve, what a cultivated taste could not, and still the latter may be very far from powerless. Go to the tasteful but lowly dwelling, which is approached by a neatly adorned avenue, set with many a flower, and stripped of all that is coarse and uncouth, and there will be many chances that its door will be hospitably thrown open, and the stranger welcomed, and his inquiries civilly and kindly answered. The very child that meets you and welcomes you, will exhibit a mind mellowed down by the transforming influence of the scenery around him.

I know that the passions may be *tame*, through deficiency of intellect, or may be on the other hand too refractory for a good taste to restrain; and when the latter has operated, even powerfully, it may not have produced the whole effect that piety would.

"None but a power divinely strong
Can turn the current of the soul."

We have seen men of polished manners, and improved tastes under a paroxism of passion, degraded into all that is coarse and forbidding in the savage. Hence the barbarous habit of duelling, even among our most accomplished men, and hence the coarse and uncourteous style with which eloquent lips, and the pen well disciplined, can sometimes attack a perhaps perfectly innocent rival. How ashamed have we sometimes been, to see, issuing from the halls of legislation, a ribaldry that would raise a blush in Newgate. These were instances when a cultivated taste had not power enough to imprison the malignant passions, and showed its infinite inferiority to that grace of God, which can bind the strong man, and even cast out devils. So the ferocious animal that is charmed by music, retains still his claws and his fangs, does but temporarily forget his habits of prey, and is mild only till the harmony that held him has ceased. The power which cannot convert the lion into a lamb, may lay his fury; what cannot render the vulture a dove, may turn away his eye from the prey. A cultivated taste may, in the hour of assault, open the mind to conviction, and lay the tumult of passion, till reason and conscience can do their office, and thus the man may be saved through its influence from a headlong plunge into misery and ruin.

We ascribe to a good taste a similar influence over the deformities of surfeiting, inebriation, and lust. In the hall of gluttony, in the haunts of intemperance, and in the dark retreats of pollution, it sees what offends it as certainly as piety is offended. That the appetites should govern reason is a disgusting perversion of all order and decorum. That the fancy, the imagination, the memory, and the whole apparatus of intellect, with the organs

of sense, and the whole family of kind and useful instincts, should be subjected to the dominion of lust, is as unseemly and incongruous, as it is impious. To see the angel mind suspend its nobler occupations, and descend from the high elevation of reflection and reason, to become conversant with the premises, and the conclusions, and the outlandish dialect of the gaming table or the vulgarities of the midnight carouse, is to an improved taste pitiable, and disgusting. I would have every man a *Christian*, that I might be sure that he will not descend so low, but, if this may not be, I would have him a man of taste and refinement, that he may not so debase himself. When we have seen the man, who might have been a philosopher, a poet, a statesman or a philanthropist; who might have vied with Locke and Boyle and Newton and Burke; might have been classed with Howard and Sharp and Clarkson and Wilberforce; might have risen in holiness of design and energy of purpose, to an enrolment with Brainard and Swarts and Vanderkemp and Martin and Mills; might have made themselves greatly useful and very dear to their generations as did Edwards and Dwight and Worcester and Moore;—to see one who might have thus exalted his nature, and given the highest value to his existence, reeling through the streets, and pouring forth pollution from his impious lips, as he returns from the rendezvous, to distract the order, and break the peace, and extinguish the last lingering hope of his family; Oh! this is a sight, with which, religion aside, and even humanity aside, a good taste is disgusted to the last degree.

And when concupiscence, in its unhallowed vagrancy, has murdered the peace of some other family, and begins to react upon home, withering all the prospects that budded and blossomed there; and the wife becomes ashamed

of her husband, and the children of their father, and the happy circle is at length broken up, and cast out the prey of a selfish and unfeeling world, then is a good taste no less than piety itself outraged. As if the clown should be permitted, with coarse untutored pencil, to besmear and utterly ruin one of the finest paintings of Raphael, or chisel into uncouthness, and distortion one of the noblest statues of Angelo; for no painting or statue, no achievement of art or genius, has ever more highly gratified a refined taste, than the image of a harmonious family, moving on in the sphere of domestic duty and enjoyment, while

> "Each fulfils his part,
> With sympathizing heart,
> In all the cares of life and love."

Let some cultivated mind compare to the life this drawing, let some statuary lay in bold relief before the eye all the smiling features of such a scene, and then let it be all defaced by the debauched husband and father, and tell me if a good taste would be more disgusted, should a swine from the mire enter a palace, and tear and besmear and destroy every object it could reach. Thus a good taste is at war with the unhallowed passions, and becomes a powerful ally of virtue.

Let me say again, that a cultivated taste is the friend of virtue, as it operates to remove the monuments of our disgrace, and objects of our embarrassment and vexation, that have marred the beauty of the exterior creation. Give it the means, and it obliterates every physical disorder, and brings back the world to its primitive beauty and loveliness, and causes to glow a boundless Eden in the valley of death. It would terrace every hill to its summit, or cast it into the deep ravine; would wall and restrain the wayward current; would drain the morass;

would shape to proportion the deformities of the protruding rock; would spread fertility over the heath, and paint every cottage, and eradicate forever the noxious shrub and plant and tree. Thus would there be destroyed the haunt of the serpent, the lair of the wolf, the retreat of the robber, the pestiferous exhalations that generate disease and death, and the world would become beautiful again as when its Almighty Creator pronounced it all very good. And then who can doubt but its tenants would become more happy and more virtuous. Having fewer fears and fewer vexations, they would indulge less frequently the malignant passions. They might sit then under their vine and their figtree, and there would be none to make them afraid.

Let me say again, that a cultivated taste tends to bring men under the influence of sacred truth, and thus holds them within the reach of resistless reformation and virtue. Reason and judgment confirm the decisions of a good taste, and are employed though imperceptibly in all its operations; hence such a taste is friendly to correct habits of thought; and the man accustomed to think correctly on one subject, is, to say the least, the better prepared to investigate another. Now there is no other system in which such a taste can find the harmony, and the order, and the consistency, and the grandeur, which prevail in the system of divine truth. *There* are positions that no genius can controvert, arguments that no discernment can impeach, illustrations that strike with the vividness of lightning, and conclusions that bear upon an ingenuous mind with the weight of a world. Hence we should decide, *a priori*, that a good taste could not overlook the book of God. And what is there in the whole apparatus of a *practical religion* to which such a taste is not congenial. The Sabbath of the Lord, that stills

the tumult of labour, calls man from his drudgery, clothes him in neatness, and wakes the peal of the church going bell, and congregates the multitude, and seats them in the sanctuary, and breaks down all adventitious distinctions, and puts a thousand minds upon the track of the same august truth; and spreads a stillness and a composure and a thoughtfulness over the whole region, how *beautiful!* how *sublime!* If we look at *facts*, do they not testify, that a cultivated taste sustains a close relationship to all this? Are the families that are represented in the solemn assembly, the mean, and the uncultivated? And do we find, lounging away the hours of holy rest, the neatly clad, and best improved portions of the community? Or do we find this better part of society in the sanctuary, joining in its prayers, and aiding in its praise, and listening to the mysteries of heavenly truth, and bringing to a higher elevation that taste, which aided in assembling them? Go to those districts of Christendom, where no gospel is proclaimed, and no multitudes assemble in the sanctuary, and no general survey of their hamlets will remind you that it is the Lord's day; and sure as life, *religion* is wanting there, and about as sure is the total absence of a cultivated taste. You will see patroling the streets, their untutored and beggarly offspring, and in most of their habitations you will discover the sure indication of minds as uncultivated, as their principles and conduct are immoral. A good taste would remove many of the obstacles to keeping a Sabbath, and building a sanctuary, and supporting a ministry, and sustaining a Sabbath school, and erecting a library for the improvement of the public mind.

Do any ask, How is all this consistent with that declaration, that, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God

hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence?" Now let me say, that men may be wise, and mighty, and noble, in the sense of this passage, and still be as destitute of a good taste as their postillion or their footman. Mere wealth may procure the wisdom and the nobility and the might here spoken of, but it does not follow that there will be the delicate imagination, and the keen sensibility, and the soundness of judgment, and the wise course of reading and of thinking, which indicate a cultivated taste. We have seen a profusion of splendour and of equipage, and a disgusting routine of ceremony, where there was the total absence of the lovely attribute we eulogize. One is virtue's foe, the other its ally. The whole of that display which wealth can purchase and in which pride and vanity and lust vegetate, is the opposite of virtue; but not so that sense of the mind which gives us an eye to see and a power to enjoy the ten thousand beauties that God has spread over the works of his hands. It is not that we can see loveliness *in the sceneries of nature* or *the productions of art*, that can offend the Lord, but that we can see it in *vice*. It is not that we have the wisdom *that waked in Eden*, that God will disapprove; but that we are wise in our own conceits, wise to do evil. It is not the nobility that is generated by thought and reflection and reasoning, and which is found in angels, that operates to shut heaven's door against us; but the nobility which originates in misapplied wealth and flattery and pride.

But it is asked whether a cultivated taste has not some-

times rendered persons unhappy, as they must often be constrained, in a world like this, to be conversant with what is coarse and disgusting? I will not deny that there is some truth in this. We have seen a delicate woman bred to the most refined enjoyments, and improved in her taste till she deserved all that the world could have done to make her happy, yoked unequally to a savage; in which case,

"Native rage and native fear rose and forbid delight,"

and we were ready to wish that, to make her condition less unpleasant her mind had remained rude. And we have seen another picture, *a false taste* connected with no native endowments, or solid improvements of intellect; and it resulted, as we should expect, in pride and passion, and fed its fantasy on ideal beauties, not seen in nature nor known in art; read of perhaps in the pages of a novel, or seen in the reveries of an hysteric imagination; and the result was misery *as it should be.* It was a sickly feverish taste, adapted only to an ideal world, and not qualified to be conversant with sober realities. But it was a vexation that such *lunacy* should be called taste.

A good taste must be connected with intellect and must grow with the growth of mind. It is then sane and sensible. If we do fear that in some few instances a cultivated taste has diminished happiness, in most cases where this has seemed the fact there was the total absence of all that deserved the name.

It is said that taste is a costly attribute, and produces poverty, and thus immorality and misery? I promptly assert that it costs far less than the appetites it restrains. Would the sot and the epicure expend in the cultivation of a good taste the fortunes lavished upon their appetites, the latter expense would be saved and the amount would

surround them with ten thousand beauties, conveniences, and comforts. It will generally happen, in this country at least, that if men will forego the pampering of their lusts they will not lack the means of gratifying a good taste. It makes not *large demands* where there are *small resources*. The lowly cottage with its little patch of shrubbery, fruits, and flowers, may be quite as tasteful as the palace with its proud and lofty architecture.

If it be thought that taste consumes time, it may be answered that it saves more than it consumes. It makes all its drafts upon idleness and vice. Its bed of flowers it cultivates, and has time left, while sloth claims another nap, and wh envy slanders a neighbour, and while appetite is gorging its pernicious viands an fatal draughts, and while covetousness is counting up its gains, and while anger is rankling and wrath is burning and revenge is plotting in the bosom of fools. I even assert that its tendency is to enrich. A good taste will seek the means of its own gratification. It will aim first to acquire the necessaries and conveniences of life, and this will lead to enterprise that will nerve the man for duty. Besides the exertions made for these purposes, he will put forth another effort that he may gratify his taste, and, other things equal, will be the more industrious and thriving man. He holds to the men about him the high station of a benefactor, and would make any effort within his power and endure any privation rather than lean for subsistence upon their charity. Could you by some magical process infuse a good taste into that multitude of paupers which brood like the incubus upon the bosom of community, you would extermin ate pauperism. When did you ever know a man of taste to become a pauper? At least when, except in

some rare instances of prolonged disease, saw you a pauper who was not wholly wanting in this inestimable endowment? When I see the new married pair with no object about them tasteful, by a kind of instinct I mark them out for ultimate poverty.

Let it not be thought that a good taste tends to form a fictitious and deceitful character. It is confessed that rustic coarseness, associated with honesty, is preferable to a Chesterfieldian system, founded less on the principles of a good taste than in falsehood and infidelity. A good taste scorns the fellowship of principles so selfish and contracted and cowardly. While it favours a polish as fair and rich as Chesterfield's, it associates with it the integrity of a Hale, the philanthropy of a Howard, and the Christian patriotism of a Wilberforce.

We have known the error to creep into colleges, that taste and genius are not likely to be united; and under this impression many silly youths have feigned a carelessness in their personal appearance, and have accustomed themselves to keep their study and their dormitory in a state of disorder and filth, as the best evidence they could give of mental vigour. And not unfrequently has this error cast reproach upon our seats of science, while parents have been grieved to see their sons return from the seminary, having unlearned many a lesson of decency that had been for years very industriously taught them. The age had produced somewhere an eccentric genius who was totally deficient in common sense and common decency, and the opinion prevailed, that to have his powers one must copy his insufferable negligence. But show me the youth who has finished his education a very clown, and I say possibly he may be a genius, and yet a beggar and a bear too; but rest assured his clownishness is a prognostic only for the bear and

the beggar, not of the accomplished and successful scholar ; and we always fear there will not be enough of the better part to cover the worse. I know we sometimes see the disgusting contrast of all this, the spruce and booted and fantastical coxcomb ; lavishing, conscience and economy not consulted, the earnings of another upon his vanity ; the gallant, when he should be the student, the curse of colleges, the stigma of his father's house, and ultimately the scorn alike of both sexes ;—but I turn from this disgusting image.

As early as possible then I would have the taste improved, and would urge its cultivation among the duties of piety. I would have every man lay the world under obligation to him, because he makes the little world about him more fertile and more beautiful. I would have every young man go away from the seat of science feeling strongly, that every deformity of the natural world and the moral, is to be cured as far as possible by his influence ; that he is to touch nothing, mind or matter, but it must come out of his hands more lovely in the sight of God or man. He must contribute to make the desert bloom around him and the wilderness to become an Eden. Let him feel that as wide as the ruins of the apostacy is the field of his labour, the curse that fell on man, and the mischief that through him fell on the territory that he occupies.

In *every department of life* a good taste gives high promise of influence and usefulness. Does the youth intend to excel as *a classical writer* ? a good taste will furnish him with language more copious, and figures more striking and appropriate, and a field of illustration more wide and diversified. It will give him a power to persuade and control that he would not have otherwise attained. In Addison, what a powerful instrument of

good was his taste. It chastened his wit and enabled him to shame into disuse many a mistaken maxim of his times, and rendered him the scourge and the dread of proud and polished profligacy. His finished style was the grand means of carrying his strictures upon manners and morals into the parlour and the palace, where they operated in purifying the character of the nation and the world. Not that a good taste should convert every writer into an Addison : this would be neither possible nor desirable. While his writings may be read with profit by every man, they may not be safely imitated by any. Let every man's style be his own. Let him go forth in his own livery, and use his own weapons in whatever cause he would sustain. Be the bent of his genius what it may, a good taste will be one of its most powerful aids. Every excrescence of his genius it will lop off. His wit it will chasten, his rashness it will restrain, his boldness and originality it will regulate, his patriotism it will purify. It will adapt his genius to more nations and ages than one. Hence it is that works of genuine taste never become obsolete. Homer and Virgil and Milton and Cowper will continue to be read through all generations.

Does the youth aspire to eminent usefulness as a preacher of righteousness? he will need the guidance of a good taste ; as there are polished sinners that must be won and accomplished believers that must be guided home to heaven. In each part of his work he will have need of language soft and chaste as angels use. A good taste need not enervate or secularize his style, but will, if there be genius, invigorate it. It will qualify him to handle profitably those subjects which are in themselves disgusting, and from which delicacy might otherwise shrink. He may descend, accompanied by a good taste as his guardian angel, into the lowest cells of

iniquity, and make war with it in all its haunts of filthiness, without offending delicacy. It will give him that address which will bring him into successful conflict with a whole family of vices, that would otherwise lie without his reach, operate beyond his control, and parry every thrust he made. It will teach him how to characterize foul iniquity, and to stamp its shame by an indignation so full of soul, and by illustrations so elevated, as to hold himself a whole atmosphere above the meanness and the turpitude he depicts. Seated on a cloud, he may, unharmed, dart his lightnings down into the dreariest and filthiest abodes of moral putrifaction. As if an angel, with sword pointed and burnished in heaven, and himself shrouded in celestical glory, should be sent to still the tumults and lay the blasphemies of the infernal prison. The better the taste employed, and the more elevated the language in which admonition and rebuke is administered, the deeper may he descend till he has seized iniquity in its profoundest caverns, and laid it naked, and lashed it into agony and into shame.

Would the youth qualify himself to be a *teacher ?* he will have great need of a cultivated taste, and that whatever may be the age at which he is to take the rising generation under his instruction. It is a grief and a loss too when our common schools are committed to the care of men void of taste ; for the hackneyed proverb is still most true,

"Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

The child of five years old may, through this deficiency of his teacher, receive a bad impression of character that will last till he dies. It is yet more lamentable when the teacher of our youth is destitute of this endowment, and cannot point out to his pupils the beauties that lie along

the track of improvement. This very failure in the teacher has probably damped the ardour of many a young man, and turned back to manual labour one who might have reached eminence in literature. It is a loss not easily estimated when the preceptors in our academies and tutors in our colleges cannot point out to their classes the flowers that bloom and the sublimities that open to view as they climb the hill of science. And through all the ascending grades of literary instruction, a good taste becomes increasingly important. There may be much in the character of our public teachers to admire; there may be those talents and that good sense that are indispensable, and that amiableness of temper which in their station is above all price, and that piety which we most of all revere, and still if a good taste be wanting the evil will be long and distinctly seen in the deportment of educated men, and be from them spread out and handed down till it affect most unhappily the character of our whole republic through many generations. On them too it must depend to give American genius its polish and elevation and influence in the literary world, and to decide whether in letters, as in correct views of true liberty and enlightened civil government, we are to stand admired and honoured as the first nation on the face of the earth.

Would the youth gain distinguished eminence at the bar? his good taste must enable him to chastise fraud and mischief without vulgarity. The ribaldry that has sometimes disgraced the legal profession, must, as society becomes more enlightened, fall into the contempt it merits, and its place be filled with solid and dignified argument and eloquence. The advocate should make himself respected by the judge and the jury, on whose enlightened decision rests the issue of his cause. And he will so often

see fraud and crime in a smooth and varnished aspect, concealed behind all that art can do to polish and baptise it into honesty, and all that wealth and influence can do to cover its deformities, and all that pride and impudence can do to confound its opposer, that an improved taste will be requisite to follow it into the parlour and the theatre and the billiard room, and hunt it down, and strip it, and mark it, that no drapery may longer conceal its hideous and accursed form. If his weapons be coarse and blunt, he will give polished vice the vantage ground, and furnish it an unanswerable argument why it should not be willing to perish by his sword. In the hall of legislation too, and on the bench, and through all the ascending grades of political elevation, a good taste is increasingly necessary.

The physician too, to be respected and useful, must be a man of taste. He is necessarily conversant with the best families and the most delicate diseases, and cannot be coarse without offence. One would not choose to invite the rustic into his sick chamber or submit himself to his surgical operations. Society is abused, (and the abuse should have been long since corrected,) when the clown is pronounced capable of practising the healing art and is sent out to learn his first lessons of decency from the gentle manners, the subdued accents, and restrained habits of the sick and dying bed. Chain him to the plough; put a spade into his hand, and not a lancet; keep him from touching the sacred casket of the *materia medica*.

No matter into what department of life and action the youth is entering from the walls of the seminary, he must every where have a good taste or he will bring literature into disrepute.

My motive then, young gentlemen, in addressing you

on this subject, is distinctly seen. God has given us a world in which there are many beauties, but through the apostacy many deformities. These beauties I would have you qualified to see and relish, and these deformities to obliterate. I would have you employ all your genius to create other beauties, till every spot about you shall smile, every eminence be comely, and every valley verdant. I would there should be in your views an enlightened graciousness, which, if not religion, is its handmaid; if not born in heaven, was early in Eden; if not possessed of power to subdue the heart, may mould some of its rougher affections into milder forms; and though not a radical cure for the calamities of life, has abundant power to soothe. You would then be more useful and happy while you live, and we should have higher hopes of meeting you in heaven, and joining you in exploring the wonders of that pure and tasteful city, whose walls are jasper, whose gates are of pearl, and whose streets are paved with gold.

Before I conclude I must be permitted to devote a few words to friendship. I see many faces here that have often lighted up my own with a smile. It is affecting to meet you again in this world of change. It is probably the last time I shall ever see you all until we meet in that country "from whose bourn no traveller returns." I learn that death has made inroads among you. It is a note of admonition to us all to be prepared to die. The past year has been to us one of peculiar interest. God has deigned to display the power of his grace under my poor ministrations, and has given me often the pleasure of sitting down by the conscience and the heart that his truth and his Spirit had impressed. And I have rejoiced to hear that he has been in very deed with you, begetting everlasting consolation and good hope in many

of your hearts. Thus it appears that he who is rich in mercy was with me in the way that I went, and remained with you. May he still be with us and keep us by his power and guide our wayward feet to his heavenly rest. There may we another day meet, and with bursting hearts rehearse the mercies that bore with us and brought us safely through, and sustained us in our trials, and managed our spiritual enemies, and covered our heads in the day of battle, and subdued our lusts, and planted our feet at last on the hills of promise. You will let me and my dear people have an interest in your prayers. And may the Lord bless this people and its ministry, and bless these rising schools of science, and all their guardians and teachers, and all who come to seek wisdom at these gates. From age to age let heaven's richest influence come down on these hills, and flow out in streams of salvation through the world, and down through all generations, till all the curse shall be repealed, and God be once more pleased with the world he made.

THE END.

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